

# MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1887

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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AN INLAND VOYAGE.

EDINBURGH.

TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY.

VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE.

FAMILIAR STUDIES OF MEN AND BOOKS.

NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS.

TREASURE ISLAND.

THE SILVERADO SQUATTERS.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES.

PRINCE OTTO.

STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE.  
KIDNAPPED.

THE MERRY MEN AND OTHER TALES AND FABLES.  
UNDERWOODS.

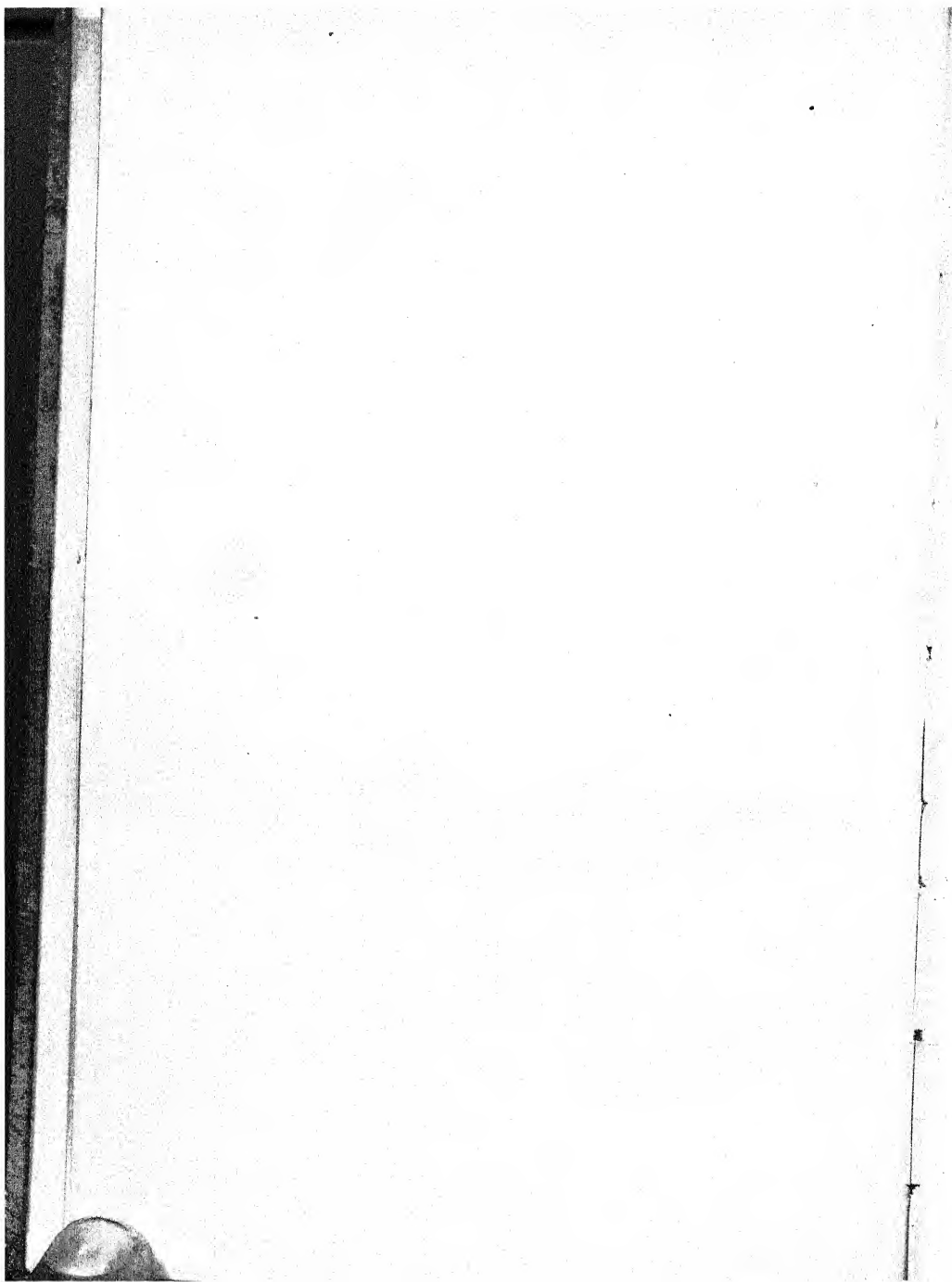
MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS.

MEMOIR OF FLEEMING JENKIN.

(WITH MRS. STEVENSON.)

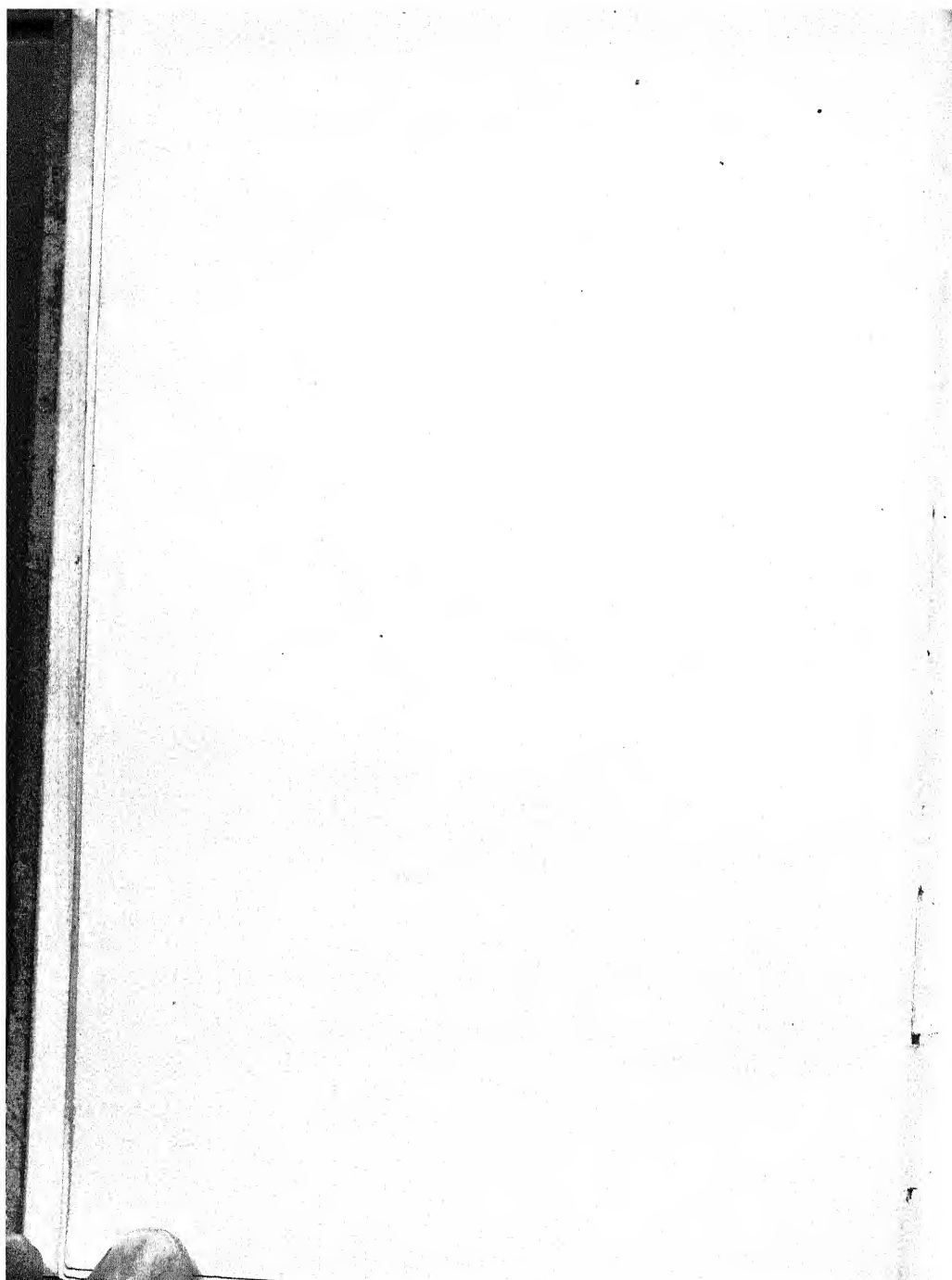
MORE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS: THE DYNAMITER.





TO  
MY MOTHER  
IN THE  
NAME OF PAST JOY AND PRESENT SORROW  
I Dedicate  
THESE MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

*S.S. 'Ludgate Hill'*  
*within sight of Cape Race*



## NOTE

THIS volume of papers, unconnected as they are, it will be better to read through from the beginning, rather than dip into at random. A certain thread of meaning binds them. Memories of childhood and youth, portraits of those who have gone before us in the battle,—taken together, they build up a face that “I have loved long since and lost awhile,” the face of what was once myself. This has come by accident; I had no design at first to be autobiographical; I was but led away by the charm of beloved memories and by regret for the irrevocable dead; and when my own young face (which is a face of the dead also) began to appear in the well as by a kind of magic, I was the first to be surprised at the occurrence.

My grandfather the pious child, my father the idle eager sentimental youth, I have thus unconsciously exposed. Of their descendant, the person of to-day, I wish to keep the secret: not because I love him better, but because, with him, I am still in a business partnership, and cannot divide interests.

Of the papers which make up the volume, some have appeared already in *The Cornhill*, *Longman's*, *Scribner*, *The English Illustrated*, *The Magazine of Art*, *The Contemporary Review*; three are here in print for the first time; and two others have enjoyed only what may be regarded as a private circulation.

R. L. S.

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I

## THE FOREIGNER AT HOME

"This is no my ain house ;  
I ken by the biggin' o't."

TWO recent books,<sup>1</sup> one by Mr. Grant White on England, one on France by the diabolically clever Mr. Hillebrand, may well have set people thinking on the divisions of races and nations. Such thoughts should arise with particular congruity and force to inhabitants of that United Kingdom, peopled from so many different stocks, babbling so many different dialects, and offering in its extent such singular contrasts, from the busiest over-population to the unkindliest desert, from the Black Country to

<sup>1</sup> 1881.



the Moor of Rannoch. It is not only when we cross the seas that we go abroad ; there are foreign parts of England ; and the race that has conquered so wide an empire has not yet managed to assimilate the islands whence she sprang. Ireland, Wales, and the Scottish mountains still cling, in part, to their old Gaelic speech. It was but the other day that English triumphed in Cornwall, and they still show in Mousehole, on St. Michael's Bay, the house of the last Cornish-speaking woman. English itself, which will now frank the traveller through the most of North America, through the greater South Sea Islands, in India, along much of the coast of Africa, and in the ports of China and Japan, is still to be heard, in its home country, in half a hundred varying stages of transition. You may go all over the States, and—setting aside the actual intrusion and influence of foreigners, negro, French, or Chinese—you shall scarce meet with so marked a difference of accent as in the forty miles between Edinburgh and

Glasgow, or of dialect as in the hundred miles between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Book English has gone round the world, but at home we still preserve the racy idioms of our fathers, and every county, in some parts every dale, has its own quality of speech, vocal or verbal. In like manner, local custom and prejudice, even local religion and local law, linger on into the latter end of the nineteenth century—*imperia in imperio*, foreign things at home.

In spite of these promptings to reflection, ignorance of his neighbours is the character of the typical John Bull. His is a domineering nature, steady in fight, imperious to command, but neither curious nor quick about the life of others. In French colonies, and still more in the Dutch, I have read that there is an immediate and lively contact between the dominant and the dominated race, that a certain sympathy is begotten, or at the least a transfusion of prejudices, making life easier for both. But the Englishman sits apart, bursting with pride and

ignorance. He figures among his vassals in the hour of peace with the same disdainful air that led him on to victory. A passing enthusiasm for some foreign art or fashion may deceive the world, it cannot impose upon his intimates. He may be amused by a foreigner as by a monkey, but he will never condescend to study him with any patience. Miss Bird, an authoress with whom I profess myself in love, declares all the viands of Japan to be uneatable—a staggering pretension. So, when the Prince of Wales's marriage was celebrated at Mentone by a dinner to the Mentonese, it was proposed to give them solid English fare—roast beef and plum pudding, and no tomfoolery. Here we have either pole of the Britannic folly. We will not eat the food of any foreigner; nor, when we have the chance, will we suffer him to eat of it himself. The same spirit inspired Miss Bird's American missionaries, who had come thousands of miles to change the faith of Japan, and openly professed their ignorance

of the religions they were trying to supplant.

I quote an American in this connection without scruple. Uncle Sam is better than John Bull, but he is tarred with the English stick. For Mr. Grant White the States are the New England States and nothing more. He wonders at the amount of drinking in London; let him try San Francisco. He wittily reproves English ignorance as to the status of women in America; but has he not himself forgotten Wyoming? The name Yankee, of which he is so tenacious, is used over the most of the great Union as a term of reproach. The Yankee States, of which he is so staunch a subject, are but a drop in the bucket. And we find in his book a vast virgin ignorance of the life and prospects of America; every view partial, parochial, not raised to the horizon; the moral feeling proper, at the largest, to a clique of States; and the whole scope and atmosphere not American, but merely Yankee. I will go far beyond him in re-

probating the assumption and the incivility of my countryfolk to their cousins from beyond the sea ; I grill in my blood over the silly rudeness of our newspaper articles ; and I do not know where to look when I find myself in company with an American and see my countrymen unbending to him as to a performing dog. But in the case of Mr. Grant White example were better than precept. Wyoming is, after all, more readily accessible to Mr. White than Boston to the English, and the New England self-sufficiency no better justified than the Britannic.

It is so, perhaps, in all countries ; perhaps in all, men are most ignorant of the foreigners at home. John Bull is ignorant of the States ; he is probably ignorant of India ; but considering his opportunities, he is far more ignorant of countries nearer his own door. There is one country, for instance—its frontier not so far from London, its people closely akin, its language the same in all essentials with the English—of which I will go bail he knows nothing. His

ignorance of the sister kingdom cannot be described; it can only be illustrated by anecdote. I once travelled with a man of plausible manners and good intelligence,—a University man, as the phrase goes,—a man, besides, who had taken his degree in life and knew a thing or two about the age we live in. We were deep in talk, whirling between Peterborough and London; among other things, he began to describe some piece of legal injustice he had recently encountered, and I observed in my innocence that things were not so in Scotland. "I beg your pardon," said he, "this is a matter of law." He had never heard of the Scots law; nor did he choose to be informed. The law was the same for the whole country, he told me roundly; every child knew that. At last, to settle matters, I explained to him that I was a member of a Scottish legal body, and had stood the brunt of an examination in the very law in question. Thereupon he looked me for a moment full in the face and dropped the conversation. This

is a monstrous instance, if you like, but it does not stand alone in the experience of Scots.

England and Scotland differ, indeed, in law, in history, in religion, in education, and in the very look of nature and men's faces, not always widely, but always trenchantly. Many particulars that struck Mr. Grant White, a Yankee, struck me, a Scot, no less forcibly; he and I felt ourselves foreigners on many common provocations. A Scotchman may tramp the better part of Europe and the United States, and never again receive so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners as on his first excursion into England. The change from a hilly to a level country strikes him with delighted wonder. Along the flat horizon there arise the frequent venerable towers of churches. He sees at the end of airy vistas the revolution of the windmill sails. He may go where he pleases in the future; he may see Alps, and Pyramids, and lions; but it will be hard to beat the pleasure of that moment. There

are, indeed, few merrier spectacles than that of many windmills bickering together in a fresh breeze over a woody country; their halting alacrity of movement, their pleasant business, making bread all day with uncouth gesticulations, their air, gigantically human, as of a creature half alive, put a spirit of romance into the tamest landscape. When the Scotch child sees them first he falls immediately in love; and from that time forward windmills keep turning in his dreams. And so, in their degree, with every feature of the life and landscape. The warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets, the green, settled, ancient look of the country; the lush hedgerows, stiles, and privy pathways in the fields; the sluggish, brimming rivers; chalk and smock-frocks; chimes of bells and the rapid, pertly-sounding English speech — they are all new to the curiosity; they are all set to English airs in the child's story that he tells himself at night. The sharp edge of novelty wears off; the feeling is scotched, but I doubt whether it is ever



killed. Rather it keeps returning, ever the more rarely and strangely, and even in scenes to which you have been long accustomed suddenly awakes and gives a relish to enjoyment or heightens the sense of isolation.

One thing especially continues unfamiliar to the Scotchman's eye—the domestic architecture, the look of streets and buildings; the quaint, venerable age of many, and the thin walls and warm colouring of all. We have, in Scotland, far fewer ancient buildings, above all in country places; and those that we have are all of hewn or harled masonry. Wood has been sparingly used in their construction; the window-frames are sunken in the wall, not flat to the front, as in England; the roofs are steeper-pitched; even a hill farm will have a massy, square, cold and permanent appearance. English houses, in comparison, have the look of cardboard toys, such as a puff might shatter. And to this the Scotchman never becomes used. His eye can never rest consciously on one of these brick houses—rickles of brick, as he

might call them—or on one of these flat-chested streets, but he is instantly reminded where he is, and instantly travels back in fancy to his home. “This is no my ain house; I ken by the biggin’ o’t.” And yet perhaps it is his own, bought with his own money, the key of it long polished in his pocket; but it has not yet, and never will be, thoroughly adopted by his imagination; nor does he cease to remember that, in the whole length and breadth of his native country, there was no building even distantly resembling it.

But it is not alone in scenery and architecture that we count England foreign. The constitution of society, the very pillars of the empire, surprise and even pain us. The dull, neglected peasant, sunk in matter, insolent, gross and servile, makes a startling contrast with our own long-legged, long-headed, thoughtful, Bible-quoting ploughman. A week or two in such a place as Suffolk leaves the Scotchman gasping. It seems incredible that within the boundaries of his

own island a class should have been thus forgotten. Even the educated and intelligent, who hold our own opinions and speak in our own words, yet seem to hold them with a difference or from another reason, and to speak on all things with less interest and conviction. The first shock of English society is like a cold plunge. It is possible that the Scot comes looking for too much, and to be sure his first experiment will be in the wrong direction. Yet surely his complaint is grounded ; surely the speech of Englishmen is too often lacking in generous ardour, the better part of the man too often withheld from the social commerce, and the contact of mind with mind evaded as with terror. A Scotch peasant will talk more liberally out of his own experience. He will not put you by with conversational counters and small jests ; he will give you the best of himself, like one interested in life and man's chief end. A Scotchman is vain, interested in himself and others, eager for sympathy, setting forth his thoughts

and experience in the best light. The egoism of the Englishman is self-contained. He does not seek to proselytise. He takes no interest in Scotland or the Scotch, and, what is the unkindest cut of all, he does not care to justify his indifference. Give him the wages of going on and being an Englishman, that is all he asks; and in the meantime, while you continue to associate, he would rather not be reminded of your baser origin. Compared with the grand, tree-like self-sufficiency of his demeanour, the vanity and curiosity of the Scot seem uneasy, vulgar and immodest. That you should continually try to establish human and serious relations, that you should actually feel an interest in John Bull, and desire and invite a return of interest from him, may argue something more awake and lively in your mind, but it still puts you in the attitude of a suitor and a poor relation. Thus even the lowest class of the educated English towers over a Scotchman by the head and shoulders.

Different indeed is the atmosphere in which Scotch and English youth begin to look about them, come to themselves in life, and gather up those first apprehensions which are the material of future thought and, to a great extent, the rule of future conduct. I have been to school in both countries, and I found, in the boys of the North, something at once rougher and more tender, at once more reserve and more expansion, a greater habitual distance chequered by glimpses of a nearer intimacy, and on the whole wider extremes of temperament and sensibility. The boy of the South seems more wholesome, but less thoughtful; he gives himself to games as to a business, striving to excel, but is not readily transported by imagination; the type remains with me as cleaner in mind and body, more active, fonder of eating, endowed with a lesser and a less romantic sense of life and of the future, and more immersed in present circumstances. And certainly, for one thing, English boys are younger for their age. Sabbath observ-

ance makes a series of grim, and perhaps serviceable, pauses in the tenor of Scotch boyhood—days of great stillness and solitude for the rebellious mind, when in the dearth of books and play, and in the intervals of studying the Shorter Catechism, the intellect and senses prey upon and test each other. The typical English Sunday, with the huge midday dinner and the plethoric afternoon, leads perhaps to different results. About the very cradle of the Scot there goes a hum of metaphysical divinity; and the whole of two divergent systems is summed up, not merely speciously, in the two first questions of the rival catechisms, the English tritely inquiring, "What is your name?" the Scottish striking at the very roots of life with, "What is the chief end of man?" and answering nobly, if obscurely, "To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." I do not wish to make an idol of the Shorter Catechism; but the fact of such a question being asked opens to us Scotch a great field of speculation; and the fact that it is asked

of all of us, from the peer to the plough-boy, binds us more nearly together. No Englishman of Byron's age, character and history, would have had patience for long theological discussions on the way to fight for Greece; but the daft Gordon blood and the Aberdonian schooldays kept their influence to the end. We have spoken of the material conditions; nor need much more be said of these: of the land lying everywhere more exposed, of the wind always louder and bleaker, of the black, roaring winters, of the gloom of high-lying, old stone cities, imminent on the windy seaboard; compared with the level streets, the warm colouring of the brick, the domestic quaintness of the architecture, among which English children begin to grow up and come to themselves in life. As the stage of the University approaches, the contrast becomes more express. The English lad goes to Oxford or Cambridge; there, in an ideal world of gardens, to lead a semi-scenic life, costumed, disciplined and drilled by proctors. Nor is

this to be regarded merely as a stage of education ; it is a piece of privilege besides, and a step that separates him further from the bulk of his compatriots. At an earlier age the Scottish lad begins his greatly different experience of crowded class-rooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious and cultured ; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain, clownish laddie from the parish school. They separate, at the session's end, one to smoke cigars about a watering-place, the other to resume the labours of the field beside his peasant family. The first muster of a college class in Scotland is a scene of curious and painful interest ; so



many lads, fresh from the heather, hang round the stove in cloddish embarrassment, ruffled by the presence of their smarter comrades, and afraid of the sound of their own rustic voices. It was in these early days, I think, that Professor Blackie won the affection of his pupils, putting these uncouth, umbrageous students at their ease with ready human geniality. Thus, at least, we have a healthy democratic atmosphere to breathe in while at work; even when there is no cordiality there is always a juxtaposition of the different classes, and in the competition of study the intellectual power of each is plainly demonstrated to the other. Our tasks ended, we of the North go forth as freemen into the humming, lamplit city. At five o'clock you may see the last of us hiving from the college gates, in the glare of the shop windows, under the green glimmer of the winter sunset. The frost tingles in our blood; no proctor lies in wait to intercept us; till the bell sounds again, we are the masters of the world; and some portion

of our lives is always Saturday, *la trêve de Dieu*.

Nor must we omit the sense of the nature of his country and his country's history gradually growing in the child's mind from story and from observation. A Scottish child hears much of shipwreck, outlying iron skerries, pitiless breakers, and great sea-lights; much of heathery mountains, wild clans, and hunted Covenanters. Breaths come to him in song of the distant Cheviots and the ring of foraying hoofs. He glories in his hard-fisted forefathers, of the iron girdle and the handful of oatmeal, who rode so swiftly and lived so sparsely on their raids. Poverty, ill-luck, enterprise, and constant resolution are the fibres of the legend of his country's history. The heroes and kings of Scotland have been tragically fated; the most marking incidents in Scottish history—Flodden, Darien, or the Forty-five—were still either failures or defeats; and the fall of Wallace and the repeated reverses of the Bruce combine with the very smallness of the

country to teach rather a moral than a material criterion for life. Britain is altogether small, the mere taproot of her extended empire ; Scotland, again, which alone the Scottish boy adopts in his imagination, is but a little part of that, and avowedly cold, sterile and unpopulous. It is not so for nothing. I once seemed to have perceived in an American boy a greater readiness of sympathy for lands that are great, and rich, and growing, like his own. It proved to be quite otherwise : a mere dumb piece of boyish romance, that I had lacked penetration to divine. But the error serves the purpose of my argument ; for I am sure, at least, that the heart of young Scotland will be always touched more nearly by paucity of number and Spartan poverty of life.

So we may argue, and yet the difference is not explained. That Shorter Catechism which I took as being so typical of Scotland, was yet composed in the city of Westminster. The division of races is more sharply marked within the borders of Scotland itself than



affection ; but it was the soil of Galloway that they kissed at the extreme end of the hostile lowlands, among a people who did not understand their speech, and who had hated, harried, and hanged them since the dawn of history. Last, and perhaps most curious, the sons of chieftains were often educated on the continent of Europe. They went abroad speaking Gaelic ; they returned speaking, not English, but the broad dialect of Scotland. Now, what idea had they in their minds when they thus, in thought, identified themselves with their ancestral enemies ? What was the sense in which they were Scotch and not English, or Scotch and not Irish ? Can a bare name be thus influential on the minds and affections of men, and a political aggregation blind them to the nature of facts ? The story of the Austrian Empire would seem to answer, No ; the far more galling business of Ireland clenches the negative from nearer home. Is it common education, common morals, a common language or a common faith, that join men into

nations? There were practically none of these in the case we are considering.

The fact remains: in spite of the difference of blood and language, the Lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the Highlander. When they meet abroad, they fall upon each other's necks in spirit; even at home there is a kind of clannish intimacy in their talk. But from his compatriot in the south the Lowlander stands consciously apart. He has had a different training; he obeys different laws; he makes his will in other terms, is otherwise divorced and married; his eyes are not at home in an English landscape or with English houses; his ear continues to remark the English speech; and even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind.

## II

### SOME COLLEGE MEMORIES<sup>1</sup>

I AM asked to write something (it is not specifically stated what) to the profit and glory of my *Alma Mater*; and the fact is I seem to be in very nearly the same case with those who addressed me, for while I am willing enough to write something, I know not what to write. Only one point I see, that if I am to write at all, it should be of the University itself and my own days under its shadow; of the things that are still the same and of those that are already changed: such talk, in short, as would pass naturally between a student of to-day and one of yes-

<sup>1</sup> Written for the "Book" of the Edinburgh University Union Fancy Fair.

terday, supposing them to meet and grow confidential.

The generations pass away swiftly enough on the high seas of life ; more swiftly still in the little bubbling backwater of the quadrangle ; so that we see there, on a scale startlingly diminished, the flight of time and the succession of men. I looked for my name the other day in last year's case book of the Speculative. Naturally enough I looked for it near the end ; it was not there, nor yet in the next column, so that I began to think it had been dropped at press ; and when at last I found it, mounted on the shoulders of so many successors, and looking in that posture like the name of a man of ninety, I was conscious of some of the dignity of years. This kind of dignity of temporal precession is likely, with prolonged life, to become more familiar, possibly less welcome ; but I felt it strongly then, it is strongly on me now, and I am the more emboldened to speak with my successors in the tone of a parent and a praiser of things past.



For, indeed, that which they attend is but a fallen University; it has doubtless some remains of good, for human institutions decline by gradual stages; but decline, in spite of all seeming embellishments, it does; and what is perhaps more singular, began to do so when I ceased to be a student. Thus, by an odd chance, I had the very last of the very best of *Alma Mater*; the same thing, I hear (which makes it the more strange), had previously happened to my father; and if they are good and do not die, something not at all unsimilar will be found in time to have befallen my successors of to-day. Of the specific points of change, of advantage in the past, of shortcoming in the present, I must own that, on a near examination, they look wondrous cloudy. The chief and far the most lamentable change is the absence of a certain lean, ugly, idle, unpopular student, whose presence was for me the gist and heart of the whole matter; whose changing humours, fine occasional purposes of good, flinching acceptance of evil, shiverings on wet, east-windy,

morning journeys up to class, infinite yawnings during lecture and unquenchable gusto in the delights of truantry, made up the sunshine and shadow of my college life. You cannot fancy what you missed in missing him ; his virtues, I make sure, are inconceivable to his successors, just as they were apparently concealed from his contemporaries, for I was practically alone in the pleasure I had in his society. Poor soul, I remember how much he was cast down at times, and how life (which had not yet begun) seemed to be already at an end, and hope quite dead, and misfortune and dishonour, like physical presences, dogging him as he went. And it may be worth while to add that these clouds rolled away in their season, and that all clouds roll away at last, and the troubles of youth in particular are things but of a moment. So this student, whom I have in my eye, took his full share of these concerns, and that very largely by his own fault ; but he still clung to his fortune, and in the midst of much misconduct, kept on in his own way

learning how to work ; and at last, to his wonder, escaped out of the stage of student-ship not openly shamed ; leaving behind him the University of Edinburgh shorn of a good deal of its interest for myself.

But while he is (in more senses than one) the first person, he is by no means the only one whom I regret, or whom the students of to-day, if they knew what they had lost, would regret also. They have still Tait, to be sure—long may they have him!—and they have still Tait's class-room, cupola and all ; but think of what a different place it was when this youth of mine (at least on roll days) would be present on the benches, and, at the near end of the platform, Lindsay senior<sup>1</sup> was airing his robust old age. It is possible my successors may have never even heard of Old Lindsay ; but when he went, a link snapped with the last century. He had something of a rustic air, sturdy and fresh and plain ; he spoke with a ripe east-country accent, which I used to admire ; his reminis-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Tait's laboratory assistant.

cences were all of journeys on foot or highways busy with post-chaises—a Scotland before steam; he had seen the coal fire on the Isle of May, and he regaled me with tales of my own grandfather. Thus he was for me a mirror of things perished; it was only in his memory that I could see the huge shock of flames of the May beacon stream to leeward, and the watchers, as they fed the fire, lay hold unscorched of the windward bars of the furnace; it was only thus that I could see my grandfather driving swiftly in a gig along the seaboard road from Pittenweem to Crail, and for all his business hurry, drawing up to speak good-humouredly with those he met. And now, in his turn, Lindsay is gone also; inhabits only the memories of other men, till these shall follow him; and figures in my reminiscences as my grandfather figured in his.

To-day, again, they have Professor Butcher, and I hear he has a prodigious deal of Greek; and they have Professor Chrystal, who is a man filled with the mathematics.

And doubtless these are set-offs. But they cannot change the fact that Professor Blackie has retired, and that Professor Kelland is dead. No man's education is complete or truly liberal who knew not Kelland. There were unutterable lessons in the mere sight of that frail old clerical gentleman, lively as a boy, kind like a fairy godfather, and keeping perfect order in his class by the spell of that very kindness. I have heard him drift into reminiscences in class time, though not for long, and give us glimpses of old-world life in out-of-the-way English parishes when he was young; thus playing the same part as Lindsay—the part of the surviving memory, signalling out of the dark backward and abysm of time the images of perished things. But it was a part that scarce became him; he somehow lacked the means: for all his silver hair and worn face, he was not truly old; and he had too much of the unrest and petulant fire of youth, and too much invincible innocence of mind, to play the veteran well. The time to measure him best, to

taste (in the old phrase) his gracious nature, was when he received his class at home. What a pretty simplicity would he then show, trying to amuse us like children with toys; and what an engaging nervousness of manner, as fearing that his efforts might not succeed! Truly he made us all feel like children, and like children embarrassed, but at the same time filled with sympathy for the conscientious, troubled elder-boy who was working so hard to entertain us. A theorist has held the view that there is no feature in man so tell-tale as his spectacles; that the mouth may be compressed and the brow smoothed artificially, but the sheen of the barnacles is diagnostic. And truly it must have been thus with Kelland; for as I still fancy I behold him frisking actively about the platform, pointer in hand, that which I seem to see most clearly is the way his glasses glittered with affection. I never knew but one other man who had (if you will permit the phrase) so kind a spectacle; and that was Dr. Appleton. But the

light in his case was tempered and passive ; in Kelland's it danced, and changed, and flashed vivaciously among the students, like a perpetual challenge to goodwill.

I cannot say so much about Professor Blackie, for a good reason. Kelland's class I attended, once even gained there a certificate of merit, the only distinction of my University career. But although I am the holder of a certificate of attendance in the professor's own hand, I cannot remember to have been present in the Greek class above a dozen times. Professor Blackie was even kind enough to remark (more than once) while in the very act of writing the document above referred to, that he did not know my face. Indeed, I denied myself many opportunities ; acting upon an extensive and highly rational system of truancy, which cost me a great deal of trouble to put in exercise—perhaps as much as would have taught me Greek—and sent me forth into the world and the profession of letters with the merest shadow of an education. But they say it is

always a good thing to have taken pains, and that success is its own reward, whatever be its nature ; so that, perhaps, even upon this I should plume myself, that no one ever played the truant with more deliberate care, and none ever had more certificates for less education. One consequence, however, of my system is that I have much less to say of Professor Blackie than I had of Professor Kelland ; and as he is still alive, and will long, I hope, continue to be so, it will not surprise you very much that I have no intention of saying it.

Meanwhile, how many others have gone—Jenkin, Hodgson, and I know not who besides ; and of that tide of students that used to throng the arch and blacken the quadrangle, how many are scattered into the remotest parts of the earth, and how many more have lain down beside their fathers in their “resting-graves” ! And again, how many of these last have not found their way there, all too early, through the stress of education ! That was one thing, at least,



from which my truantry protected me. I am sorry indeed that I have no Greek, but I should be sorrier still if I were dead; nor do I know the name of that branch of knowledge which is worth acquiring at the price of a brain fever. There are many sordid tragedies in the life of the student, above all if he be poor, or drunken, or both; but nothing more moves a wise man's pity than the case of the lad who is in too much hurry to be learned. And so, for the sake of a moral at the end, I will call up one more figure, and have done. A student, ambitious of success by that hot, intemperate manner of study that now grows so common, read night and day for an examination. As he went on, the task became more easy to him, sleep was more easily banished, his brain grew hot and clear and more capacious, the necessary knowledge daily fuller and more orderly. It came to the eve of the trial and he watched all night in his high chamber, reviewing what he knew, and already secure of success. His window looked eastward,

and being (as I said) high up, and the house itself standing on a hill, commanded a view over dwindling suburbs to a country horizon. At last my student drew up his blind, and still in quite a jocund humour, looked abroad. Day was breaking, the east was tinging with strange fires, the clouds breaking up for the coming of the sun ; and at the sight, nameless terror seized upon his mind. He was sane, his senses were undisturbed ; he saw clearly, and knew what he was seeing, and knew that it was normal ; but he could neither bear to see it nor find the strength to look away, and fled in panic from his chamber into the enclosure of the street. In the cool air and silence, and among the sleeping houses, his strength was renewed. Nothing troubled him but the memory of what had passed, and an abject fear of its return.

"Gallo canente, spes redit,  
Aegris salus refunditur,  
Lapsis fides revertitur,"

as they sang of old in Portugal in the

Morning Office. But to him that good hour of cockcrow, and the changes of the dawn, had brought panic, and lasting doubt, and such terror as he still shook to think of. He dared not return to his lodging; he could not eat; he sat down, he rose up, he wandered; the city woke about him with its cheerful bustle, the sun climbed overhead; and still he grew but the more absorbed in the distress of his recollection and the fear of his past fear. At the appointed hour, he came to the door of the place of examination; but when he was asked, he had forgotten his name. Seeing him so disordered, they had not the heart to send him away, but gave him a paper and admitted him, still nameless, to the Hall. Vain kindness, vain efforts. He could only sit in a still growing horror, writing nothing, ignorant of all, his mind filled with a single memory of the breaking day and his own intolerable fear. And that same night he was tossing in a brain fever.

People are afraid of war and wounds and

dentists, all with excellent reason ; but these are not to be compared with such chaotic terrors of the mind as fell on this young man, and made him cover his eyes from the innocent morning. We all have by our bedsides the box of the Merchant Abudah, thank God, securely enough shut ; but when a young man sacrifices sleep to labour, let him have a care, for he is playing with the lock.



### III

## OLD MORTALITY

### I

THERE is a certain graveyard, looked upon on the one side by a prison, on the other by the windows of a quiet hotel ; below, under a steep cliff, it beholds the traffic of many lines of rail, and the scream of the engine and the shock of meeting buffers mount to it all day long. The aisles are lined with the inclosed sepulchres of families, door beyond door, like houses in a street ; and in the morning the shadow of the prison turrets, and of many tall memorials, fall upon the graves. There, in the hot fits of youth, I came to be unhappy. Pleasant incidents are woven with my memory of the

place. I here made friends with a certain plain old gentleman, a visitor on sunny mornings, gravely cheerful, who, with one eye upon the place that awaited him, chirped about his youth like winter sparrows; a beautiful housemaid of the hotel once, for some days together, dumbly flirted with me from a window and kept my wild heart flying; and once—she possibly remembers—the wise Eugenia followed me to that austere inclosure. Her hair came down, and in the shelter of the tomb my trembling fingers helped her to repair the braid. But for the most part I went there solitary and, with irrevocable emotion, pored on the names of the forgotten. Name after name, and to each the conventional attributions and the idle dates: a regiment of the unknown that had been the joy of mothers, and had thrilled with the illusions of youth, and at last, in the dim sick-room, wrestled with the pangs of old mortality. In that whole crew of the silenced there was but one of whom my fancy had received a picture; and he, with his

comely, florid countenance, bewigged and habited in scarlet, and in his day combining fame and popularity, stood forth, like a taunt, among that company of phantom appellations. It was then possible to leave behind us something more explicit than these severe, monotonous and lying epitaphs; and the thing left, the memory of a painted picture and what we call the immortality of a name, was hardly more desirable than mere oblivion. Even David Hume, as he lay composed beneath that "circular idea," was fainter than a dream; and when the housemaid, broom in hand, smiled and beckoned from the open window, the fame of that bewigged philosopher melted like a raindrop in the sea.

And yet in soberness I cared as little for the housemaid as for David Hume. The interests of youth are rarely frank; his passions, like Noah's dove, come home to roost. The fire, sensibility, and volume of his own nature, that is all that he has learned to recognise. The tumultuary and gray tide of life, the empire of routine, the unre-

joining faces of his elders, fill him with contemptuous surprise ; there also he seems to walk among the tombs of spirits ; and it is only in the course of years, and after much rubbing with his fellow-men, that he begins by glimpses to see himself from without and his fellows from within : to know his own for one among the thousand undenoted countenances of the city street, and to divine in others the throb of human agony and hope. In the meantime he will avoid the hospital doors, the pale faces, the cripple, the sweet whiff of chloroform—for there, on the most thoughtless, the pains of others are burned home ; but he will continue to walk, in a divine self-pity, the aisles of the forgotten graveyard. The length of man's life, which is endless to the brave and busy, is scorned by his ambitious thought. He cannot bear to have come for so little, and to go again so wholly. He cannot bear, above all, in that brief scene, to be still idle, and by way of cure, neglects the little that he has to do. The parable of the talent is the brief epitome



of youth. To believe in immortality is one thing, but it is first needful to believe in life. Denunciatory preachers seem not to suspect that they may be taken gravely and in evil part; that young men may come to think of time as of a moment, and with the pride of Satan wave back the inadequate gift. Yet here is a true peril; this it is that sets them to pace the graveyard alleys and to read, with strange extremes of pity and derision, the memorials of the dead.

Books were the proper remedy: books of vivid human import, forcing upon their minds the issues, pleasures, busyness, importance and immediacy of that life in which they stand; books of smiling or heroic temper, to excite or to console; books of a large design, shadowing the complexity of that game of consequences to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least. But the average sermon flees the point, disporting itself in that eternity of which we know, and need to know, so little; avoiding the bright, crowded, and momentous fields of life where destiny

awaits us. Upon the average book a writer may be silent; he may set it down to his ill-hap that when his own youth was in the acrid fermentation, he should have fallen and fed upon the cheerless fields of Obermann. Yet to Mr. Arnold, who led him to these pastures, he still bears a grudge. The day is perhaps not far off when people will begin to count *Moll Flanders*, ay, or *The Country Wife*, more wholesome and more pious diet than these guide-books to consistent egoism.

But the most inhuman of boys soon wearies of the inhumanity of Obermann. And even while I still continued to be a haunter of the graveyard, I began insensibly to turn my attention to the grave-diggers, and was weaned out of myself to observe the conduct of visitors. This was dayspring, indeed, to a lad in such great darkness. Not that I began to see men, or to try to see them, from within, nor to learn charity and modesty and justice from the sight; but still stared at them externally from the prison windows of my affectation. Once I remem-

ber to have observed two working-women with a baby halting by a grave ; there was something monumental in the grouping, one upright carrying the child, the other with bowed face crouching by her side. A wreath of immortelles under a glass dome had thus attracted them ; and, drawing near, I overheard their judgment on that wonder. "Eh ! what extravagance !" To a youth afflicted with the callosity of sentiment, this quaint and pregnant saying appeared merely base.

My acquaintance with grave-diggers, considering its length, was unremarkable. One, indeed, whom I found plying his spade in the red evening, high above Allan Water and in the shadow of Dunblane Cathedral, told me of his acquaintance with the birds that still attended on his labours ; how some would even perch about him, waiting for their prey ; and in a true Sexton's Calendar, how the species varied with the season of the year. But this was the very poetry of the profession. The others whom I knew were somewhat dry. A faint flavour of the gardener

hung about them, but sophisticated and disbloomed. They had engagements to keep, not alone with the deliberate series of the seasons, but with mankind's clocks and hour-long measurement of time. And thus there was no leisure for the relishing pinch, or the hour-long gossip, foot on spade. They were men wrapped up in their grim business ; they liked well to open long-closed family vaults, blowing in the key and throwing wide the grating ; and they carried in their minds a calendar of names and dates. It would be "in fifty-twa" that such a tomb was last opened for "Miss Jemimy." It was thus they spoke of their past patients—familiarily but not without respect, like old family servants. Here is indeed a servant, whom we forget that we possess ; who does not wait at the bright table, or run at the bell's summons, but patiently smokes his pipe beside the mortuary fire, and in his faithful memory notches the burials of our race. To suspect Shakespeare in his maturity of a superficial touch savours of paradox ; yet he was surely

in error when he attributed insensibility to the digger of the grave. But perhaps it is on Hamlet that the charge should lie; or perhaps the English sexton differs from the Scotch. The "goodman delver," reckoning up his years of office, might have at least suggested other thoughts. It is a pride common among sextons. A cabinet-maker does not count his cabinets, nor even an author his volumes, save when they stare upon him from the shelves; but the grave-digger numbers his graves. He would indeed be something different from human if his solitary open-air and tragic labours left not a broad mark upon his mind. There, in his tranquil aisle, apart from city clamour, among the cats and robins and the ancient effigies and legends of the tomb, he waits the continual passage of his contemporaries, falling like minute drops into eternity. As they fall, he counts them; and this enumeration, which was at first perhaps appalling to his soul, in the process of years and by the kindly influence of habit grows

to be his pride and pleasure. There are many common stories telling how he piques himself on crowded cemeteries. But I will rather tell of the old grave-digger of Monkton, to whose unsuffering bedside the minister was summoned. He dwelt in a cottage built into the wall of the churchyard ; and through a bull's-eye pane above his bed he could see, as he lay dying, the rank grasses and the upright and recumbent stones. Dr. Laurie was, I think, a Moderate : 'tis certain, at least, that he took a very Roman view of deathbed dispositions ; for he told the old man that he had lived beyond man's natural years, that his life had been easy and reputable, that his family had all grown up and been a credit to his care, and that it now behoved him unregretfully to gird his loins and follow the majority. The grave-digger heard him out ; then he raised himself upon one elbow, and with the other hand pointed through the window to the scene of his life-long labours. "Doctor," he said, "I ha'e laid three hunner and fower-score in

that kirkyaird ; an it had been His wull," indicating Heaven, "I would ha'e likit weel to ha'e made out the fower hunner." But it was not to be ; this tragedian of the fifth act had now another part to play ; and the time had come when others were to gird and carry him.

## II

I would fain strike a note that should be more heroical ; but the ground of all youth's suffering, solitude, hysteria, and haunting of the grave, is nothing else than naked, ignorant selfishness. It is himself that he sees dead ; those are his virtues that are forgotten ; his is the vague epitaph. Pity him but the more, if pity be your cue ; for where a man is all pride, vanity, and personal aspiration, he goes through fire unshielded. In every part and corner of our life, to lose oneself is to be gainer ; to forget oneself is to be happy ; and this poor, laughable and tragic fool has not yet learned the rudiments ; himself, giant Prometheus, is still

ironed on the peaks of Caucasus. But by and by his truant interests will leave that tortured body, slip abroad and gather flowers. Then shall death appear before him in an altered guise ; no longer as a doom peculiar to himself, whether fate's crowning injustice or his own last vengeance upon those who fail to value him ; but now as a power that wounds him far more tenderly, not without solemn compensations, taking and giving, bereaving and yet storing up.

The first step for all is to learn to the dregs our own ignoble fallibility. When we have fallen through storey after storey of our vanity and aspiration, and sit rueful among the ruins, then it is that we begin to measure the stature of our friends : how they stand between us and our own contempt, believing in our best ; how, linking us with others, and still spreading wide the influential circle, they weave us in and in with the fabric of contemporary life ; and to what petty size they dwarf the virtues and the vices that appeared gigantic in our youth. So that at



the last, when such a pin falls out—when there vanishes in the least breath of time one of those rich magazines of life on which we drew for our supply—when he who had first dawned upon us as a face among the faces of the city, and, still growing, came to bulk on our regard with those clear features of the loved and living man, falls in a breath to memory and shadow, there falls along with him a whole wing of the palace of our life.

### III

One such face I now remember; one such blank some half a dozen of us labour to dissemble. In his youth he was most beautiful in person, most serene and genial by disposition; full of racy words and quaint thoughts. Laughter attended on his coming. He had the air of a great gentleman, jovial and royal with his equals, and to the poorest student gentle and attentive. Power seemed to reside in him exhaustless; we saw him stoop to play with us, but held him marked

for higher destinies ; we loved his notice ; and I have rarely had my pride more gratified than when he sat at my father's table, my acknowledged friend. So he walked among us, both hands full of gifts, carrying with non-chalance the seeds of a most influential life.

The powers and the ground of friendship is a mystery ; but, looking back, I can discern that, in part, we loved the thing he was, for some shadow of what he was to be. For with all his beauty, power, breeding, urbanity and mirth, there was in those days something soulless in our friend. He would astonish us by sallies, witty, innocent and inhumane ; and by a misapplied Johnsonian pleasantry, demolish honest sentiment. I can still see and hear him, as he went his way along the lamplit streets, *Là ci darem la mano* on his lips, a noble figure of a youth, but following vanity and incredulous of good ; and sure enough, somewhere on the high seas of life, with his health, his hopes, his patrimony and his self-respect, miserably went down.

From this disaster, like a spent swimmer, he came desperately ashore, bankrupt of money and consideration; creeping to the family he had deserted; with broken wing, never more to rise. But in his face there was a light of knowledge that was new to it. Of the wounds of his body he was never healed; died of them gradually, with clear-eyed resignation; of his wounded pride, we knew only from his silence. He returned to that city where he had lorded it in his ambitious youth; lived there alone, seeing few; striving to retrieve the irretrievable; at times still grappling with that mortal frailty that had brought him down; still joying in his friend's successes; his laugh still ready but with kindlier music; and over all his thoughts the shadow of that unalterable law which he had disavowed and which had brought him low. Lastly, when his bodily evils had quite disabled him, he lay a great while dying, still without complaint, still finding interests; to his last step gentle, urbane and with the will to smile.

The tale of this great failure is, to those who remained true to him, the tale of a success. In his youth he took thought for no one but himself; when he came ashore again, his whole armada lost, he seemed to think of none but others. Such was his tenderness for others, such his instinct of fine courtesy and pride, that of that impure passion of remorse he never breathed a syllable; even regret was rare with him, and pointed with a jest. You would not have dreamed, if you had known him then, that this was that great failure, that beacon to young men, over whose fall a whole society had hissed and pointed fingers. Often have we gone to him, red-hot with our own hopeful sorrows, railing on the rose-leaves in our princely bed of life, and he would patiently give ear and wisely counsel; and it was only upon some return of our own thoughts that we were reminded what manner of man this was to whom we disembosomed: a man, by his own fault, ruined; shut out of the garden of his gifts; his whole city of hope

both ploughed and salted ; silently awaiting the deliverer. Then something took us by the throat ; and to see him there, so gentle, patient, brave and pious, oppressed but not cast down, sorrow was so swallowed up in admiration that we could not dare to pity him. Even if the old fault flashed out again, it but awoke our wonder that, in that lost battle, he should have still the energy to fight. He had gone to ruin with a kind of kingly *abandon*, like one who condescended ; but once ruined, with the lights all out, he fought as for a kingdom. Most men, finding themselves the authors of their own disgrace, rail the louder against God or destiny. Most men, when they repent, oblige their friends to share the bitterness of that repentance. But he had held an inquest and passed sentence : *mene, mene* ; and condemned himself to smiling silence. He had given trouble enough ; had earned misfortune amply, and foregone the right to murmur.

Thus was our old comrade, like Samson, careless in his days of strength ; but on the

coming of adversity, and when that strength was gone that had betrayed him—"for our strength is weakness"—he began to blossom and bring forth. Well, now, he is out of the fight: the burden that he bore thrown down before the great deliverer. We

"in the vast cathedral leave him;  
God accept him,  
Christ receive him!"

#### IV

If we go now and look on these innumerable epitaphs, the pathos and the irony are strangely fled. They do not stand merely to the dead, these foolish monuments; they are pillars and legends set up to glorify the difficult but not desperate life of man. This ground is hallowed by the heroes of defeat.

I see the indifferent pass before my friend's last resting-place; pause, with a shrug of pity, marvelling that so rich an argosy had sunk. A pity, now that he is done with suffering, a pity most uncalled for, and an

ignorant wonder. Before those who loved him, his memory shines like a reproach; they honour him for silent lessons; they cherish his example; and in what remains before them of their toil, fear to be unworthy of the dead. For this proud man was one of those who prospered in the valley of humiliation;—of whom Bunyan wrote that, “Though Christian had the hard hap to meet in the valley with Apollyon, yet I must tell you, that in former times men have met with angels here; have found pearls here; and have in this place found the words of life.”

#### IV

### A COLLEGE MAGAZINE

#### I

ALL through my boyhood and youth, I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously



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for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me ; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise ; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also ; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts ; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

This was all excellent, no doubt ; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most efficient part of my training. Good though it was, it only taught me (so far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of

the essential note and the right word : things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And regarded as training, it had one grave defect ; for it set me no standard of achievement. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labours at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it ; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful and always unsuccessful ; but at least in these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to De-foe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey tricks, which was called

*The Vanity of Morals*: it was to have had a second part, *The Vanity of Knowledge*; and as I had neither morality nor scholarship, the names were apt; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghostlike, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne. So with my other works: *Cain*, an epic, was (save the mark!) an imitation of *Sordello*: *Robin Hood*, a tale in verse, took an eclectic middle course among the fields of Keats, Chaucer and Morris: in *Monmouth*, a tragedy, I reclined on the bosom of Mr. Swinburne; in my innumerable gouty-footed lyrics, I followed many masters; in the first draft of *The King's Pardon*, a tragedy, I was on the trail of no lesser man than John Webster; in the second draft of the same piece, with staggering versatility, I had shifted my allegiance to Congreve, and of course conceived my

fable in a less serious vein—for it was not Congreve's verse, it was his exquisite prose, that I admired and sought to copy. Even at the age of thirteen I had tried to do justice to the inhabitants of the famous city of Peebles in the style of the *Book of Snobs*. So I might go on for ever, through all my abortive novels, and down to my later plays, of which I think more tenderly, for they were not only conceived at first under the bracing influence of old Dumas, but have met with resurrections: one, strangely bettered by another hand, came on the stage itself and was played by bodily actors; the other, originally known as *Semiramis: a Tragedy*, I have observed on bookstalls under the alias of *Prince Otto*. But enough has been said to show by what arts of impersonation, and in what purely ventriloquial efforts I first saw my words on paper.

That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature

than Keats's ; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned ; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out : But this is not the way to be original ! It is not ; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero ; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters : he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school. It is only from a school that we can expect to have good writers ; it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the

student should have tried all that are possible ; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of words, he should long have practised the literary scales ; and it is only after years of such gymnastic that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him try as he please, he is still sure of failure ; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only highroad to success. I must have had some disposition to learn ; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed ; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends ; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must



have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. "Padding," said one. Another wrote: "I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly." No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned; and I was not surprised nor even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at—well, then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living. Lastly, I had a piece of good fortune which is the occasion of this paper, and by which I was able to see my literature in print, and to measure experimentally how far I stood from the favour of the public.

## II

The Speculative Society is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Brougham, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey-carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up at night with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room; a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary. Here a member can warm himself and loaf and read; here, in defiance of Senatus-consults, he can smoke. The Senatus looks askance at these privileges; looks even with a somewhat vinegar aspect on the whole society; which argues a lack of proportion in the learned mind, for the world, we may be

have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. "Padding," said one. Another wrote: "I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly." No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned; and I was not surprised nor even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at—well, then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living. Lastly, I had a piece of good fortune which is the occasion of this paper, and by which I was able to see my literature in print, and to measure experimentally how far I stood from the favour of the public.

## II

The Speculative Society is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Brougham, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey-carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up at night with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room; a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary. Here a member can warm himself and loaf and read; here, in defiance of Senatus-consults, he can smoke. The Senatus looks askance at these privileges; looks even with a somewhat vinegar aspect on the whole society; which argues a lack of proportion in the learned mind, for the world, we may be

sure, will prize far higher this haunt of dead lions than all the living dogs of the professorate.

I sat one December morning in the library of the Speculative ; a very humble-minded youth, though it was a virtue I never had much credit for ; yet proud of my privileges as a member of the Spec. ; proud of the pipe I was smoking in the teeth of the Senatus ; and in particular, proud of being in the next room to three very distinguished students, who were then conversing beside the corridor fire. One of these has now his name on the back of several volumes, and his voice, I learn, is influential in the law courts. Of the death of the second, you have just been reading what I had to say. And the third also has escaped out of that battle of life in which he fought so hard, it may be so unwisely. They were all three, as I have said, notable students ; but this was the most conspicuous. Wealthy, handsome, ambitious, adventurous, diplomatic, a reader of Balzac, and of all men that I have known,

the most like to one of Balzac's characters, he led a life, and was attended by an ill fortune, that could be properly set forth only in the *Comédie Humaine*. He had then his eye on Parliament; and soon after the time of which I write, he made a showy speech at a political dinner, was cried up to heaven next day in the *Courant*, and the day after was dashed lower than earth with a charge of plagiarism in the *Scotsman*. Report would have it (I daresay, very wrongly) that he was betrayed by one in whom he particularly trusted, and that the author of the charge had learned its truth from his own lips. Thus, at least, he was up one day on a pinnacle, admired and envied by all; and the next, though still but a boy, he was publicly disgraced. The blow would have broken a less finely tempered spirit; and even him I suppose it rendered reckless; for he took flight to London, and there, in a fast club, disposed of the bulk of his considerable patrimony in the space of one winter. For years thereafter he lived I

know not how ; always well dressed, always in good hotels and good society, always with empty pockets. The charm of his manner may have stood him in good stead ; but though my own manners are very agreeable, I have never found in them a source of livelihood ; and to explain the miracle of his continued existence, I must fall back upon the theory of the philosopher, that in his case, as in all of the same kind, "there was a suffering relative in the background." From this genteel eclipse he reappeared upon the scene, and presently sought me out in the character of a generous editor. It is in this part that I best remember him ; tall, slender, with a not ungraceful stoop ; looking quite like a refined gentleman, and quite like an urbane adventurer ; smiling with an engaging ambiguity ; cocking at you one peaked eyebrow with a great appearance of finesse ; speaking low and sweet and thick, with a touch of burr ; telling strange tales with singular deliberation and, to a patient listener, excellent effect. After all

these ups and downs, he seemed still, like the rich student that he was of yore, to breathe of money; seemed still perfectly sure of himself and certain of his end. Yet he was then upon the brink of his last overthrow. He had set himself to found the strangest thing in our society: one of those periodical sheets from which men suppose themselves to learn opinions; in which young gentlemen from the universities are encouraged, at so much a line, to garble facts, insult foreign nations and calumniate private individuals; and which are now the source of glory, so that if a man's name be often enough printed there, he becomes a kind of demigod; and people will pardon him when he talks back and forth, as they do for Mr. Gladstone; and crowd him to suffocation on railway platforms, as they did the other day to General Boulanger; and buy his literary works, as I hope you have just done for me. Our fathers, when they were upon some great enterprise, would sacrifice a life; building, it may be, a favourite slave



into the foundations of their palace. It was with his own life that my companion disarmed the envy of the gods. He fought his paper single-handed; trusting no one, for he was something of a cynic; up early and down late, for he was nothing of a sluggard; daily ear-wiggling influential men, for he was a master of ingratiation. In that slender and silken fellow there must have been a rare vein of courage, that he should thus have died at his employment; and doubtless ambition spoke loudly in his ear, and doubtless love also, for it seems there was a marriage in his view had he succeeded. But he died, and his paper died after him; and of all this grace, and tact, and courage, it must seem to our blind eyes as if there had come literally nothing.

These three students sat, as I was saying, in the corridor, under the mural tablet that records the virtues of Macbean, the former secretary. We would often smile at that ineloquent memorial, and thought it a poor thing to come into the world at all and leave

no more behind one than Macbean. And yet of these three, two are gone and have left less; and this book, perhaps, when it is old and foxy, and some one picks it up in a corner of a book-shop, and glances through it, smiling at the old, graceless turns of speech, and perhaps for the love of *Alma Mater* (which may be still extant and flourishing) buys it, not without haggling, for some pence—this book may alone preserve a memory of James Walter Ferrier and Robert Glasgow Brown.

Their thoughts ran very differently on that December morning; they were all on fire with ambition; and when they had called me in to them, and made me a sharer in their design, I too became drunken with pride and hope. We were to found a University magazine. A pair of little, active brothers—Livingstone by name, great skip-pers on the foot, great rubbers of the hands, who kept a book-shop over against the University building—had been debauched to play the part of publishers. We four

were to be conjunct editors and, what was the main point of the concern, to print our own works ; while, by every rule of arithmetic—that flatterer of credulity—the adventure must succeed and bring great profit. Well, well : it was a bright vision. I went home that morning walking upon air. To have been chosen by these three distinguished students was to me the most unspeakable advance ; it was my first draught of consideration ; it reconciled me to myself and to my fellow-men ; and as I steered round the railings at the Tron, I could not withhold my lips from smiling publicly. Yet, in the bottom of my heart, I knew that magazine would be a grim fiasco ; I knew it would not be worth reading ; I knew, even if it were, that nobody would read it ; and I kept wondering how I should be able, upon my compact income of twelve pounds per annum, payable monthly, to meet my share in the expense. It was a comfortable thought to me that I had a father.

The magazine appeared, in a yellow cover

which was the best part of it, for at least it was unassuming ; it ran four months in undisturbed obscurity, and died without a gasp. The first number was edited by all four of us with prodigious bustle ; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me ; the third I edited alone ; and it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth. It would perhaps be still more difficult to say who read it. Poor yellow sheet, that looked so hopefully in the Livingstones' window ! Poor, harmless paper, that might have gone to print a *Shakespeare* on, and was instead so clumsily defaced with nonsense ! And, shall I say, Poor Editors ? I cannot pity myself, to whom it was all pure gain. It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night. I had sent a copy to the lady with whom my heart was at that time somewhat engaged, and who did all that in her lay to break it ; and she, with some tact, passed

over the gift and my cherished contributions in silence. I will not say that I was pleased at this; but I will tell her now, if by any chance she takes up the work of her former servant, that I thought the better of her taste. I cleared the decks after this lost engagement; had the necessary interview with my father, which passed off not amiss; paid over my share of the expense to the two little, active brothers, who rubbed their hands as much, but methought skipped rather less than formerly, having perhaps, these two also, embarked upon the enterprise with some graceful illusions; and then, reviewing the whole episode, I told myself that the time was not yet ripe, nor the man ready; and to work I went again with my penny version-books, having fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student.

## III

From this defunct periodical I am going to reprint one of my own papers. The poor little piece is all tail-foremost. I have done my best to straighten its array, I have pruned it fearlessly, and it remains invertebrate and wordy. No self-respecting magazine would print the thing; and here you behold it in a bound volume, not for any worth of its own, but for the sake of the man whom it purports dimly to represent and some of whose sayings it preserves; so that in this volume of *Memories and Portraits*, Robert Young, the Swanston gardener, may stand alongside of John Todd, the Swanston shepherd. Not that John and Robert drew very close together in their lives; for John was rough, he smelt of the windy brae; and Robert was gentle, and smacked of the garden in the hollow. Perhaps it is to my shame that I liked John the better of the two; he had grit and dash, and that salt of the Old Adam that pleases men with any

savage inheritance of blood ; and he was a wayfarer besides, and took my gipsy fancy. But however that may be, and however Robert's profile may be blurred in the boyish sketch that follows, he was a man of a most quaint and beautiful nature, whom, if it were possible to recast a piece of work so old, I should like well to draw again with a maturer touch. And as I think of him and of John, I wonder in what other country two such men would be found dwelling together, in a hamlet of some twenty cottages, in the woody fold of a green hill.



## V

### AN OLD SCOTCH GARDENER

I THINK I might almost have said the last: somewhere, indeed, in the uttermost glens of the Lammermuir or among the south-western hills there may yet linger a decrepid representative of this bygone good fellowship; but as far as actual experience goes, I have only met one man in my life who might fitly be quoted in the same breath with Andrew Fairservice,—though without his vices. He was a man whose very presence could impart a savour of quaint antiquity to the baldest and most modern flower-plots. There was a dignity about his tall stooping form, and an earnestness in his wrinkled face that recalled Don Quixote;



It was  
dis-  
thought his  
for he  
early and  
sanguine;  
he was  
slender  
been a  
thus  
problemless  
doubt-  
was a  
But  
and  
it  
there had

laying,  
that  
former  
that  
a poor  
leave

The first time that I saw him, I fancy Robert was pretty old already: he had certainly begun to use his years as a stalking horse. Latterly he was beyond all the impudencies of logic, considering a reference to the parish register worth all the reasons in the world. "*I am old and well stricken in years,*" he was wont to say; and I never found any one bold enough to answer the argument. Apart from this vantage that he kept over all who were not yet octogenarian, he had some other drawbacks as a gardener. He shrank the very place he cultivated. The dignity and reduced gentility of his appearance made the small garden cut a sorry figure. He was full of tales of greater situations in his younger days. He spoke of castles and parks with a humbling familiarity. He told of places where under-gardeners had trembled at his looks, where there were meres and swanneries, labyrinths of walk and wildernesses of sad shrubbery in his control, till you could not help feeling that it was condescension on his part to dress

### *Memories and Portraits*

Don Quixote who had come through  
aining of the Covenant, and been  
ed in his youth on *Walker's Lives* and  
*and let Loose*.

; as I could not bear to let such a  
ss away with no sketch preserved of  
fashioned virtues, I hope the reader  
e this as an excuse for the present  
nd judge as kindly as he can the  
es of my description. To me, who  
o difficult to tell the little that I know,  
s essentially as a *genius loci*. It is  
le to separate his spare form and old  
t from the garden in the lap of the  
its rocks overgrown with clematis,  
wy walks, and the splendid breadth  
oaign that one saw from the north-  
er. The garden and gardener seem  
parcel of each other. When I take  
his right surroundings and try to  
appear for me on paper, he looks un-  
hantasmal: the best that I can say  
y some notion to those that never  
ut to me it will be ever impotent.

The first time that I saw him, I fancy Robert was pretty old already: he had certainly begun to use his years as a stalking horse. Latterly he was beyond all the impudencies of logic, considering a reference to the parish register worth all the reasons in the world. "*I am old and well stricken in years,*" he was wont to say; and I never found any one bold enough to answer the argument. Apart from this vantage that he kept over all who were not yet octogenarian, he had some other drawbacks as a gardener. He shrank the very place he cultivated. The dignity and reduced gentility of his appearance made the small garden cut a sorry figure. He was full of tales of greater situations in his younger days. He spoke of castles and parks with a humbling familiarity. He told of places where under-gardeners had trembled at his looks, where there were meres and swanneries, labyrinths of walk and wildernesses of sad shrubbery in his control, till you could not help feeling that it was condescension on his part to dress

your humbler garden plots. You were thrown at once into an invidious position. You felt that you were profiting by the needs of dignity, and that his poverty and not his will consented to your vulgar rule. Involuntarily you compared yourself with the swineherd that made Alfred watch his cakes, or some bloated citizen who may have given his sons and his condescension to the fallen Dionysius. Nor were the disagreeables purely fanciful and metaphysical, for the sway that he exercised over your feelings he extended to your garden, and, through the garden, to your diet. He would trim a hedge, throw away a favourite plant, or fill the most favoured and fertile section of the garden with a vegetable that none of us could eat, in supreme contempt for our opinion. If you asked him to send you in one of your own artichokes, "*That I wull, mem,*" he would say, "*with pleasure, for it is mair blessed to give than to receive.*" Ay, and even when, by extra twisting of the screw, we prevailed on him to prefer our commands to his own in-

clination, and he went away, stately and sad, professing that "*our will was his pleasure*," but yet reminding us that he would do it "*with feelin's*,"—even then, I say, the triumphant master felt humbled in his triumph, felt that he ruled on sufferance only, that he was taking a mean advantage of the other's low estate, and that the whole scene had been one of those "slights that patient merit of the unworthy takes."

In flowers his taste was old-fashioned and catholic; affecting sunflowers and dahlias, wallflowers and roses, and holding in supreme aversion whatsoever was fantastic, new-fashioned or wild. There was one exception to this sweeping ban. Foxgloves, though undoubtedly guilty on the last count, he not only spared, but loved; and when the shrubbery was being thinned, he stayed his hand and dexterously manipulated his bill in order to save every stately stem. In boyhood, as he told me once, speaking in that tone that only actors and the old-fashioned common folk can use now—

adays, his heart grew "*proud*" within him when he came on a burn-course among the braes of Manor that shone purple with their graceful trophies ; and not all his apprenticeship and practice for so many years of precise gardening had banished these boyish recollections from his heart. Indeed, he was a man keenly alive to the beauty of all that was bygone. He abounded in old stories of his boyhood, and kept pious account of all his former pleasures ; and when he went (on a holiday) to visit one of the fabled great places of the earth where he had served before, he came back full of little pre-Raphaelite reminiscences that showed real passion for the past, such as might have shaken hands with Hazlitt or Jean-Jacques.

But however his sympathy with his old feelings might affect his liking for the fox-gloves, the very truth was that he scorned all flowers together. They were but garnishings, childish toys, trifling ornaments for ladies' chimney-shelves. It was towards his cauliflowers and peas and cabbage that his

heart grew warm. His preference for the more useful growths was such that cabbages were found invading the flower-plots, and an outpost of savoys was once discovered in the centre of the lawn. He would prelect over some thriving plant with wonderful enthusiasm, piling reminiscence on reminiscence of former and perhaps yet finer specimens. Yet even then he did not let the credit leave himself. He had, indeed, raised "*finer o' them*;" but it seemed that no one else had been favoured with a like success. All other gardeners, in fact, were mere foils to his own superior attainments; and he would recount, with perfect soberness of voice and visage, how so and so had wondered, and such another could scarcely give credit to his eyes. Nor was it with his rivals only that he parted praise and blame. If you remarked how well a plant was looking, he would gravely touch his hat and thank you with solemn unction; all credit in the matter falling to him. If, on the other hand, you called his attention to some back-going



vegetable, he would quote Scripture: "*Paul may plant and Apollos may water*;" all blame being left to Providence, on the score of deficient rain or untimely frosts.

There was one thing in the garden that shared his preference with his favourite cabbages and rhubarb, and that other was the bee-hive. Their sound, their industry, perhaps their sweet product also, had taken hold of his imagination and heart, whether by way of memory or no I cannot say, although perhaps the bees too were linked to him by some recollection of Manor braes and his country childhood. Nevertheless, he was too chary of his personal safety or (let me rather say) his personal dignity to mingle in any active office towards them. But he could stand by while one of the contemned rivals did the work for him, and protest that it was quite safe in spite of his own considerate distance and the cries of the distressed assistant. In regard to bees, he was rather a man of word than deed, and some of his most striking sentences had the

bees for text. "*They are indeed wonderful creatures, mem,*" he said once. "*They just mind me o' what the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon—and I think she said it wi' a sigh, —' The half of it hath not been told unto me.'*"

As far as the Bible goes, he was deeply read. Like the old Covenanters, of whom he was the worthy representative, his mouth was full of sacred quotations; it was the book that he had studied most and thought upon most deeply. To many people in his station the Bible, and perhaps Burns, are the only books of any vital literary merit that they read, feeding themselves, for the rest, on the draff of country newspapers, and the very instructive but not very palatable pabulum of some cheap educational series. This was Robert's position. All day long he had dreamed of the Hebrew stories, and his head had been full of Hebrew poetry and Gospel ethics; until they had struck deep root into his heart, and the very expressions had become a part of him; so that he rarely spoke without some antique idiom

or Scripture mannerism that gave a raciness to the merest trivialities of talk. But the influence of the Bible did not stop here. There was more in Robert than quaint phrase and ready store of reference. He was imbued with a spirit of peace and love: he interposed between man and wife: he threw himself between the angry, touching his hat the while with all the ceremony of an usher: he protected the birds from everybody but himself, seeing, I suppose, a great difference between official execution and wanton sport. His mistress telling him one day to put some ferns into his master's particular corner, and adding, "Though, indeed, Robert, he doesn't deserve them, for he wouldn't help me to gather them," "*Eh, mem,*" replies Robert, "*but I wouldnae say that, for I think he's just a most deservin' gentleman.*" Again, two of our friends, who were on intimate terms, and accustomed to use language to each other, somewhat without the bounds of the parliamentary, happened to differ about the position of a seat in the

garden. The discussion, as was usual when these two were at it, soon waxed tolerably insulting on both sides. Every one accustomed to such controversies several times a day was quietly enjoying this prize-fight of somewhat abusive wit—every one but Robert, to whom the perfect good faith of the whole quarrel seemed unquestionable, and who, after having waited till his conscience would suffer him to wait no more, and till he expected every moment that the disputants would fall to blows, cut suddenly in with tones of almost tearful entreaty: "*Eh, but, gentlemen, I wad hae nae mair words about it!*" One thing was noticeable about Robert's religion: it was neither dogmatic nor sectarian. He never expatiated (at least, in my hearing) on the doctrines of his creed, and he never condemned anybody else. I have no doubt that he held all Roman Catholics, Atheists, and Mahometans as considerably out of it; I don't believe he had any sympathy for Prelacy; and the natural feelings of man must have made him

a little sore about Free-Churchism ; but at least, he never talked about these views, never grew controversially noisy, and never openly aspersed the belief or practice of anybody. Now all this is not generally characteristic of Scotch piety ; Scotch sects being churches militant with a vengeance, and Scotch believers perpetual crusaders the one against the other, and missionaries the one to the other. Perhaps Robert's originally tender heart was what made the difference ; or, perhaps, his solitary and pleasant labour among fruits and flowers had taught him a more sunshiny creed than those whose work is among the tares of fallen humanity ; and the soft influences of the garden had entered deep into his spirit,

“Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.”

But I could go on for ever chronicling his golden sayings or telling of his innocent and living piety. I had meant to tell of his cottage, with the German pipe hung reverently

above the fire, and the shell box that he had made for his son, and of which he would say pathetically: "*He was real pleased wi' it at first, but I think he's got a kind o' tired o' it now*"—the son being then a man of about forty. But I will let all these pass. "'Tis more significant: he's dead." The earth, that he had digged so much in his life, was dug out by another for himself; and the flowers that he had tended drew their life still from him, but in a new and nearer way. A bird flew about the open grave, as if it too wished to honour the obsequies of one who had so often quoted Scripture in favour of its kind: "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing, and yet not one of them falleth to the ground."

Yes, he is dead. But the kings did not rise in the place of death to greet him "with taunting proverbs" as they rose to greet the haughty Babylonian; for in his life he was lowly, and a peacemaker and a servant of God.

## PASTORAL

TO the home in early life is to be  
 still ~~more~~ and quickened with novelties;  
 but when ~~the~~ have come, it only casts a  
 more ~~clear~~ light upon the past. As in  
 those ~~common~~ photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 the ima ~~ges~~ new sitter brings out but  
 the mo ~~st~~ clearly the central features of the  
 race; w ~~hen~~ youth has flown, each new  
 impressi ~~on~~ only deepens the sense of na-  
 tionality ~~and~~ the desire of native places. So  
 may some ~~of~~ of Royal Écossais or the  
 Albany ~~Regiment~~, as he mounted guard  
 about F ~~rench~~ chateaus, so may some officer  
 marching ~~in~~ his company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the ~~pollers~~, have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilled lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith



## PASTORAL

THE early years of life is to be  
 a life of novelty; and when  
 the first years have passed, it only casts a  
 shadow of light upon the past. As in  
 those early photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 as time goes on, each new letter brings out but  
 the more clearly the central features of the  
 past, when the youth has flown, each new  
 independent letter deepens the sense of na-  
 ture, and the desire of native places. So  
 early in the career of Royal Hussars or the  
 Albany Regiment, as he mounted guard  
 about French soldiers, so may some officer  
 commanding an company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the soldiers, have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the liliated lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith

## PASTORAL

THE more time an early life is to be  
 enjoyed, and surrounded with novelties;  
 and when these have passed it only casts a  
 more searching light upon the past. As in  
 those comparative photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 the young of each sex, after brings out but  
 too clearly the central features of the  
 face, when time's youth has flown, each new  
 impression only deepens the sense of na-  
 turality and the desire of native places. So  
 one saw a soldier of Royal Fencibles or the  
 Albany Regiment, as he mounted guard  
 about Fort St. John, so that some officer  
 needing his company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the pickets, have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the liliated lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith

## VI

## PASTORAL

THE first home of early life is to be  
 defined and permeated with novelties;  
 but when years have passed it only casts a  
 glance backward upon the past. As in  
 those composite photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 the image of each new scene brings out but  
 the more clearly the central features of the  
 past when time grows less dense, each new  
 impression only deepens the sense of na-  
 ture and the dream of native places. So  
 may some soldier of Royal Flanders or the  
 Albany Regiment, as he mounted guard  
 about French children, so may some officer  
 marching for company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the pebbles have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilled lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith

## PASTORAL

THE more remote in early life is to be  
 delighted and gladdened with novelties;  
 but when years have passed it only casts a  
 hazy, clouding light upon the past. As in  
 those wonderful photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 the image of each new actor brings out but  
 too more clearly the general features of the  
 past when time's sword has flown, each new  
 impression only deepens the sense of na-  
 turalness and the beauty of native places. So  
 may some officer of Royal Scots or the  
 Argyll Regiment, as he mounted guard  
 about French soldiers, or may some officer  
 commanding his company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the peasants, have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilled lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith



## PASTORAL

THE more time we spend, life is to be  
 sustained and concerned with novelties ;  
 the more time we spend, the more it casts a  
 more interesting light upon the past. As in  
 those composite photographs of Mr. Galton's,  
 the things which were once brought out but  
 the more clearly the central features of the  
 past which once we had seen, each new  
 impression only deepens the sense of na-  
 ture and the beauty of nature's places. So  
 the more we know of Royal Fountains or the  
 Library, Baginbun, as he mounted guard  
 about Farnham, or the way some officer  
 mounting his company of the Scots-Dutch  
 among the painters have felt the soft rains

of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the liliated lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves—or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so—and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith

of the many and well-named mills—Bell's Mills, and Canon Mills, and Silver Mills; nor Redford Burn of pleasant memories; nor yet, for all its smallness, that nameless trickle that springs in the green bosom of Allermuir, and is fed from Halkerside with a perennial teacupful, and threads the moss under the Shearer's Knowe, and makes one pool there, overhung by a rock, where I loved to sit and make bad verses, and is then kidnapped in its infancy by subterranean pipes for the service of the sea-beholding city in the plain. From many points in the moss you may see at one glance its whole course and that of all its tributaries; the geographer of this Lilliput may visit all its corners without sitting down, and not yet begin to be breathed; Shearer's Knowe and Halkerside are but names of adjacent cantons on a single shoulder of a hill, as names are squandered (it would seem to the inexpert, in superfluity) upon these upland sheepwalks; a bucket would receive the whole discharge of the toy

river ; it would take it an appreciable time to fill your morning bath ; for the most part, besides, it soaks unseen through the moss ; and yet for the sake of auld lang syne, and the figure of a certain *genius loci*, I am condemned to linger awhile in fancy by its shores ; and if the nymph (who cannot be above a span in stature) will but inspire my pen, I would gladly carry the reader along with me.

John Todd, when I knew him, was already "the oldest herd on the Pentlands," and had been all his days faithful to that curlew-scattering, sheep-collecting life. He remembered the droving days, when the drove roads, that now lie green and solitary through the heather, were thronged thoroughfares. He had himself often marched flocks into England, sleeping on the hillsides with his caravan ; and by his account it was a rough business not without danger. The drove roads lay apart from habitation ; the drovers met in the wilderness, as to-day the deep-sea fishers meet off the banks in the

solitude of the Atlantic ; and in the one as in the other case rough habits and fist-law were the rule. Crimes were committed, sheep filched, and drovers robbed and beaten ; most of which offences had a moorland burial and were never heard of in the courts of justice. John, in those days, was at least once attacked,—by two men after his watch,—and at least once, betrayed by his habitual anger, fell under the danger of the law and was clapped into some rustic prison-house, the doors of which he burst in the night and was no more heard of in that quarter. When I knew him, his life had fallen in quieter places, and he had no cares beyond the dulness of his dogs and the inroads of pedestrians from town. But for a man of his propensity to wrath these were enough ; he knew neither rest nor peace, except by snatches ; in the gray of the summer morning, and already from far up the hill, he would wake the “toun” with the sound of his shoutings ; and in the lambing time, his cries were not yet silenced

late at night. This wrathful voice of a man unseen might be said to haunt that quarter of the Pentlands, an audible bogie; and no doubt it added to the fear in which men stood of John a touch of something legendary. For my own part, he was at first my enemy, and I, in my character of a rambling boy, his natural abhorrence. It was long before I saw him near at hand, knowing him only by some sudden blast of bellowing from far above, bidding me "c'way oot amang the sheep." The quietest recesses of the hill harboured this ogre; I skulked in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Time, and John Todd was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questing dragoons. Little by little we dropped into civilities; his hail at sight of me began to have less of the ring of a war-slogan; soon, we never met but he produced his snuff-box, which was with him, like the calumet with the Red Indian, a part of the heraldry of peace; and at length, in the ripeness of time, we

grew to be a pair of friends, and when I lived alone in these parts in the winter, it was a settled thing for John to "give me a cry" over the garden wall as he set forth upon his evening round, and for me to overtake and bear him company.

That dread voice of his that shook the hills when he was angry, fell in ordinary talk very pleasantly upon the ear, with a kind of honied, friendly whine, not far off singing, that was eminently Scottish. He laughed not very often, and when he did, with a sudden, loud haw-haw, hearty but somehow joyless, like an echo from a rock. His face was permanently set and coloured; ruddy and stiff with weathering; more like a picture than a face; yet with a certain strain and a threat of latent anger in the expression, like that of a man trained too fine and harassed with perpetual vigilance. He spoke in the richest dialect of Scotch I ever heard; the words in themselves were a pleasure and often a surprise to me, so that I often came back from one of our patrols

with new acquisitions ; and this vocabulary he would handle like a master, stalking a little before me, "beard on shoulder," the plaid hanging loosely about him, the yellow staff clapped under his arm, and guiding me uphill by that devious, tactical ascent which seems peculiar to men of his trade. I might count him with the best talkers ; only that talking Scotch and talking English seem incomparable acts. He touched on nothing at least, but he adorned it ; when he narrated, the scene was before you ; when he spoke (as he did mostly) of his own antique business, the thing took on a colour of romance and curiosity that was surprising. The clans of sheep with their particular territories on the hill, and how, in the yearly killings and purchases, each must be proportionally thinned and strengthened ; the midnight busyness of animals, the signs of the weather, the cares of the snowy season, the exquisite stupidity of sheep, the exquisite cunning of dogs : all these he could present so humanly, and with so much old experience and living



gusto, that weariness was excluded. And in the midst he would suddenly straighten his bowed back, the stick would fly abroad in demonstration, and the sharp thunder of his voice roll out a long itinerary for the dogs, so that you saw at last the use of that great wealth of names for every knowe and howe upon the hillside; and the dogs, having hearkened with lowered tails and raised faces, would run up their flags again to the mast-head and spread themselves upon the indicated circuit. It used to fill me with wonder how they could follow and retain so long a story. But John denied these creatures all intelligence; they were the constant butt of his passion and contempt; it was just possible to work with the like of them, he said, —not more than possible. And then he would expand upon the subject of the really good dogs that he had known, and the one really good dog that he had himself possessed. He had been offered forty pounds for it; but a good collie was worth more than that, more than anything, to a "herd;" he did the

herd's work for him. "As for the like of them!" he would cry, and scornfully indicate the scouring tails of his assistants.

Once—I translate John's Lallan, for I cannot do it justice, being born *Britannis in montibus*, indeed, but alas! *inerudito sæculo*—once, in the days of his good dog, he had bought some sheep in Edinburgh, and on the way out, the road being crowded, two were lost. This was a reproach to John, and a slur upon the dog; and both were alive to their misfortune. Word came, after some days, that a farmer about Braid had found a pair of sheep; and thither went John and the dog to ask for restitution. But the farmer was a hard man and stood upon his rights. "How were they marked?" he asked; and since John had bought right and left from many sellers and had no notion of the marks—"Very well," said the farmer, "then it's only right that I should keep them."—"Well," said John, "it's a fact that I cannae tell the sheep; but if my dog can, will ye let me have them?" The farmer

was honest as well as hard, and besides I daresay he had little fear of the ordeal; so he had all the sheep upon his farm into one large park, and turned John's dog into their midst. That hairy man of business knew his errand well; he knew that John and he had bought two sheep and (to their shame) lost them about Boroughmuirhead; he knew besides (the Lord knows how, unless by listening) that they were come to Braid for their recovery; and without pause or blunder singled out, first one and then another, the two waifs. It was that afternoon the forty pounds were offered and refused. And the shepherd and his dog—what do I say? the true shepherd and his man—set off together by Fairmilehead in jocund humour, and “smiled to ither” all the way home, with the two recovered ones before them. So far, so good; but intelligence may be abused. The dog, as he is by little man's inferior in mind, is only by little his superior in virtue; and John had another collie tale of quite a different complexion. At the foot of the

moss behind Kirk Yetton (Caer Ketton, wise men say) there is a scrog of low wood and a pool with a dam for washing sheep. John was one day lying under a bush in the scrog, when he was aware of a collie on the far hillside skulking down through the deepest of the heather with obtrusive stealth. He knew the dog; knew him for a clever, rising practitioner from quite a distant farm; one whom perhaps he had coveted as he saw him masterfully steering flocks to market. But what did the practitioner so far from home? and why this guilty and secret manœuvring towards the pool?—for it was towards the pool that he was heading. John lay the closer under his bush, and presently saw the dog come forth upon the margin, look all about to see if he were anywhere observed, plunge in and repeatedly wash himself over head and ears, and then (but now openly and with tail in air) strike homeward over the hills. That same night word was sent his master, and the rising practitioner, shaken up from where he lay, all innocence

before the fire, was had out to a dykeside and promptly shot; for alas! he was that foulest of criminals under trust, a sheep-eater; and it was from the maculation of sheep's blood that he had come so far to cleanse himself in the pool behind Kirk Yetton.

A trade that touches nature, one that lies at the foundations of life, in which we have all had ancestors employed, so that on a hint of it ancestral memories revive, lends itself to literary use, vocal or written. The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads; and when I hear with a particular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds. Thus novels begin to touch not the fine *dilettanti* but the gross mass of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailing, adventure, death or child-birth; and thus ancient out-

door crafts and occupations, whether Mr. Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe, lift romance into a near neighbourhood with epic. These aged things have on them the dew of man's morning; they lie near, not so much to us, the semi-artificial flowerets, as to the trunk and aboriginal taproot of the race. A thousand interests spring up in the process of the ages, and a thousand perish; that is now an eccentricity or a lost art which was once the fashion of an empire; and those only are perennial matters that rouse us to-day, and that roused men in all epochs of the past. There is a certain critic, not indeed of execution but of matter, whom I dare be known to set before the best: a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave-mouths, of a pleasant afternoon, to munch his berries—his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting by his side: his name I never heard, but he is often

described as Probably Arboreal, which may serve for recognition. Each has his own tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits Probably Arboreal; in all our veins there run some minims of his old, wild, tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill.

We have not so far to climb to come to shepherds; and it may be I had one for an ascendant who has largely moulded me. But yet I think I owe my taste for that hill-side business rather to the art and interest of John Todd. He it was that made it live for me, as the artist can make all things live. It was through him the simple strategy of massing sheep upon a snowy evening, with its attendant scampering of earnest, shaggy aides-de-camp, was an affair that I never wearied of seeing, and that I never weary of recalling to mind: the shadow of the night darkening on the hills, inscrutable black blots of snow shower moving here and there like

night already come, huddles of yellow sheep and dartings of black dogs upon the snow, a bitter air that took you by the throat, unearthly harpings of the wind along the moors; and for centre piece to all these features and influences, John winding up the brae, keeping his captain's eye upon all sides, and breaking, ever and again, into a spasm of bellowing that seemed to make the evening bleaker. It is thus that I still see him in my mind's eye, perched on a hump of the declivity not far from Halkerside, his staff in airy flourish, his great voice taking hold upon the hills and echoing terror to the lowlands; I, meanwhile, standing somewhat back, until the fit should be over, and, with a pinch of snuff, my friend relapse into his easy, even conversation.





## VII

### THE MANSE

I HAVE named, among many rivers that make music in my memory, that dirty Water of Leith. Often and often I desire to look upon it again; and the choice of a point of view is easy to me. It should be at a certain water-door, embowered in shrubbery. The river is there dammed back for the service of the flour-mill just below, so that it lies deep and darkling, and the sand slopes into brown obscurity with a glint of gold; and it has but newly been recruited by the borrowings of the snuff-mill just above, and these, tumbling merrily in, shake the pool to its black heart, fill it with drowsy eddies, and set the curded froth of many

other mills solemnly steering to and fro upon the surface. Or so it was when I was young ; for change, and the masons, and the pruning-knife, have been busy ; and if I could hope to repeat a cherished experience, it must be on many and impossible conditions. I must choose, as well as the point of view, a certain moment in my growth, so that the scale may be exaggerated, and the trees on the steep opposite side may seem to climb to heaven, and the sand by the water-door, where I am standing, seem as low as Styx. And I must choose the season also, so that the valley may be brimmed like a cup with sunshine and the songs of birds ;—and the year of grace, so that when I turn to leave the riverside I may find the old manse and its inhabitants unchanged.

It was a place in that time like no other : the garden cut into provinces by a great hedge of beech, and overlooked by the church and the terrace of the churchyard, where the tombstones were thick, and after

nightfall "spunkies" might be seen to dance, at least by children ; flower-plots lying warm in sunshine ; laurels and the great yew making elsewhere a pleasing horror of shade ; the smell of water rising from all round, with an added tang of paper-mills ; the sound of water everywhere, and the sound of mills—the wheel and the dam singing their alternate strain ; the birds on every bush and from every corner of the overhanging woods pealing out their notes until the air throbbed with them ; and in the midst of this, the manse. I see it, by the standard of my childish stature, as a great and roomy house. In truth, it was not so large as I supposed, nor yet so convenient, and, standing where it did, it is difficult to suppose that it was healthful. Yet a large family of stalwart sons and tall daughters was housed and reared, and came to man and womanhood in that nest of little chambers ; so that the face of the earth was peppered with the children of the manse, and letters with outlandish stamps became familiar to the local postman,

and the walls of the little chambers brightened with the wonders of the East. The dullest could see this was a house that had a pair of hands in divers foreign places: a well-beloved house—its image fondly dwelt on by many travellers.

Here lived an ancestor of mine, who was a herd of men. I read him, judging with older criticism the report of childish observation, as a man of singular simplicity of nature; unemotional, and hating the display of what he felt; standing contented on the old ways; a lover of his life and innocent habits to the end. We children admired him: partly for his beautiful face and silver hair, for none more than children are concerned for beauty and, above all, for beauty in the old; partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers, in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habit, oppressed us with a kind of terror. When not abroad, he sat much alone, writing

sermons or letters to his scattered family in a dark and cold room with a library of bloodless books—or so they seemed in those days, although I have some of them now on my own shelves and like well enough to read them ; and these lonely hours wrapped him in the greater gloom for our imaginations. But the study had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures, gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes. I cannot depict (for I have no such passions now) the greed with which I beheld them ; and when I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that, if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.

“ Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will  
He slumber that thee keeps,”

it ran : a strange conglomerate of the unpronounceable, a sad model to set in childhood before one who was himself to be a versifier, and a task in recitation that really merited reward. And I must suppose the

old man thought so too, and was either touched or amused by the performance ; for he took me in his arms with most unwonted tenderness, and kissed me, and gave me a little kindly sermon for my psalm ; so that, for that day, we were clerk and parson. I was struck by this reception into so tender a surprise that I forgot my disappointment. And indeed the hope was one of those that childhood forges for a pastime, and with no design upon reality. Nothing was more unlikely than that my grandfather should strip himself of one of those pictures, love-gifts and reminders of his absent sons ; nothing more unlikely than that he should bestow it upon me. He had no idea of spoiling children, leaving all that to my aunt ; he had fared hard himself, and blubbered under the rod in the last century ; and his ways were still Spartan for the young. The last word I heard upon his lips was in this Spartan key. He had overwalked in the teeth of an east wind, and was now near the end of his many days. He

sat by the dining-room fire, with his white hair, pale face and bloodshot eyes, a somewhat awful figure; and my aunt had given him a dose of our good old Scotch medicine, Dr. Gregory's powder. Now that remedy, as the work of a near kinsman of Rob Roy himself, may have a savour of romance for the imagination; but it comes uncouthly to the palate. The old gentleman had taken it with a wry face; and that being accomplished, sat with perfect simplicity, like a child's, munching a "barley-sugar kiss." But when my aunt, having the canister open in her hands, proposed to let me share in the sweets, he interfered at once. I had had no Gregory; then I should have no barley-sugar kiss: so he decided with a touch of irritation. And just then the phaeton coming opportunely to the kitchen door—for such was our unlordly fashion—I was taken for the last time from the presence of my grandfather.

Now I often wonder what I have inherited from this old minister. I must suppose,

indeed, that he was fond of preaching sermons, and so am I, though I never heard it maintained that either of us loved to hear them. He sought health in his youth in the Isle of Wight, and I have sought it in both hemispheres ; but whereas he found and kept it, I am still on the quest. He was a great lover of Shakespeare, whom he read aloud, I have been told, with taste ; well, I love my Shakespeare also, and am persuaded I can read him well, though I own I never have been told so. He made embroidery, designing his own patterns ; and in that kind of work I never made anything but a kettle-holder in Berlin wool, and an odd garter of knitting, which was as black as the chimney before I had done with it. He loved port, and nuts, and porter ; and so do I, but they agreed better with my grandfather, which seems to me a breach of contract. He had chalk-stones in his fingers ; and these, in good time, I may possibly inherit, but I would much rather have inherited his noble presence. Try as I please, I cannot join



myself on with the reverend doctor ; and all the while, no doubt, and even as I write the phrase, he moves in my blood, and whispers words to me, and sits efficient in the very knot and centre of my being. In his garden, as I played there, I learned the love of mills—or had I an ancestor a miller?—and a kindness for the neighbourhood of graves, as homely things not without their poetry—or had I an ancestor a sexton? But what of the garden where he played himself?—for that, too, was a scene of my education. Some part of me played there in the eighteenth century, and ran races under the green avenue at Pilrig ; some part of me trudged up Leith Walk, which was still a country place, and sat on the High School benches, and was thrashed, perhaps, by Dr. Adam. The house where I spent my youth was not yet thought upon ; but we made holiday parties among the cornfields on its site, and ate strawberries and cream near by at a gardener's. All this I had forgotten ; only my grandfather remembered and once re-

mind me. I have forgotten, too, how we grew up, and took orders, and went to our first Ayrshire parish, and fell in love with and married a daughter of Burns's Dr. Smith—"Smith opens out his cauld harangues." I have forgotten, but I was there all the same, and heard stories of Burns at first hand.

And there is a thing stranger than all that; for this *homunculus* or part-man of mine that walked about the eighteenth century with Dr. Balfour in his youth, was in the way of meeting other *homunculos* or part-men, in the persons of my other ancestors. These were of a lower order, and doubtless we looked down upon them duly. But as I went to college with Dr. Balfour, I may have seen the lamp and oil man taking down the shutters from his shop beside the Tron;—we may have had a rabbit-hutch or a bookshelf made for us by a certain carpenter in I know not what wynd of the old, smoky city; or, upon some holiday excursion, we may have looked into the windows of a cottage in a

flower-garden and seen a certain weaver plying his shuttle. And these were all kinsmen of mine upon the other side ; and from the eyes of the lamp and oil man one-half of my unborn father, and one-quarter of myself, looked out upon us as we went by to college. Nothing of all this would cross the mind of the young student, as he posted up the Bridges with trim, stockinged legs, in that city of cocked hats and good Scotch still unadulterated. It would not cross his mind that he should have a daughter ; and the lamp and oil man, just then beginning, by a not unnatural metastasis, to bloom into a lighthouse-engineer, should have a grandson ; and that these two, in the fulness of time, should wed ; and some portion of that student himself should survive yet a year or two longer in the person of their child.

But our ancestral adventures are beyond even the arithmetic of fancy ; and it is the chief recommendation of long pedigrees, that we can follow backward the careers of our *homunculos* and be reminded of our antenatal

lives. Our conscious years are but a moment in the history of the elements that build us. Are you a bank-clerk, and do you live at Peckham? It was not always so. And though to-day I am only a man of letters, either tradition errs or I was present when there landed at St. Andrews a French barber-surgeon, to tend the health and the beard of the great Cardinal Beaton; I have shaken a spear in the Debateable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots; I was present when a skipper, plying from Dundee, smuggled Jacobites to France after the '15; I was in a West India merchant's office, perhaps next door to Bailie Nichol Jarvie's, and managed the business of a plantation in St. Kitt's; I was with my engineer-grandfather (the son-in-law of the lamp and oil man) when he sailed north about Scotland on the famous cruise that gave us the *Pirate* and the *Lord of the Isles*; I was with him, too, on the Bell Rock, in the fog, when the *Smeaton* had drifted from her moorings, and the Aberdeen men, pick in hand, had seized

upon the only boats, and he must stoop and lap sea-water before his tongue could utter audible words ; and once more with him when the Bell Rock beacon took a "thrawe," and his workmen fled into the tower, then nearly finished, and he sat unmoved reading in his Bible—or affecting to read—till one after another slunk back with confusion of countenance to their engineer. Yes, parts of me have seen life, and met adventures, and sometimes met them well. And away in the still cloudier past, the threads that make me up can be traced by fancy into the bosoms of thousands and millions of ascendants : Picts who rallied round Macbeth and the old (and highly preferable) system of descent by females, fleërs from before the legions of Agricola, marchers in Pannonian morasses, star-gazers on Chaldæan plateaus ; and, furthest of all, what face is this that fancy can see peering through the disparted branches ? What sleeper in green tree-tops, what muncher of nuts, concludes my pedigree ? Probably arboreal in his habits. . . .

And I know not which is the more strange, that I should carry about with me some fibres of my minister-grandfather; or that in him, as he sat in his cool study, grave, reverend, contented gentleman, there was an aboriginal frisking of the blood that was not his; tree-top memories, like undeveloped negatives, lay dormant in his mind; tree-top instincts awoke and were trod down; and Probably Arboreal (scarce to be distinguished from a monkey) gambolled and chattered in the brain of the old divine.

## VIII

### MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

THOSE who try to be artists use, time after time, the matter of their recollections, setting and resetting little coloured memories of men and scenes, rigging up (it may be) some especial friend in the attire of a buccancer, and decreeing armies to manœuvre, or murder to be done, on the playground of their youth. But the memories are a fairy gift which cannot be worn out in using. After a dozen services in various tales, the little sunbright pictures of the past still shine in the mind's eye with not a lineament defaced, not a tint impaired. *Glück und unglück wird gesang*, if Goethe pleases; yet only by endless avatars, the

original re-embodiment after each. So that a writer, in time, begins to wonder at the perdurable life of these impressions ; begins, perhaps, to fancy that he wrongs them when he weaves them in with fiction ; and looking back on them with ever-growing kindness, puts them at last, substantive jewels, in a setting of their own.

One or two of these pleasant spectres I think I have laid. I used one but the other day : a little eyot of dense, freshwater sand, where I once waded deep in butterburrs, delighting to hear the song of the river on both sides, and to tell myself that I was indeed and at last upon an island. Two of my puppets lay there a summer's day, hearkening to the shearers at work in river-side fields and to the drums of the gray old garrison upon the neighbouring hill. And this was, I think, done rightly : the place was rightly peopled—and now belongs not to me but to my puppets—for a time at least. In time, perhaps, the puppets will grow faint ; the original memory swim up instant



as ever ; and I shall once more lie in bed, and see the little sandy isle in Allan Water as it is in nature, and the child (that once was me) wading there in butterburrs ; and wonder at the instancy and virgin freshness of that memory ; and be pricked again, in season and out of season, by the desire to weave it into art.

There is another isle in my collection, the memory of which besieges me. I put a whole family there, in one of my tales ; and later on, threw upon its shores, and condemned to several days of rain and shellfish on its tumbled boulders, the hero of another. The ink is not yet faded ; the sound of the sentences is still in my mind's ear ; and I am under a spell to write of that island again.

# I

The little isle of Earraid lies close in to the south-west corner of the Ross of Mull : the sound of Iona on one side, across which you may see the isle and church of Columba ;

the open sea to the other, where you shall be able to mark, on a clear, surfy day, the breakers running white on many sunken rocks. I first saw it, or first remember seeing it, framed in the round bull's-eye of a cabin port, the sea lying smooth along its shores like the waters of a lake, the colourless, clear light of the early morning making plain its heathery and rocky hummocks. There stood upon it, in these days, a single rude house of uncemented stones, approached by a pier of wreckwood. It must have been very early, for it was then summer, and in summer, in that latitude, day scarcely withdraws ; but even at that hour the house was making a sweet smoke of peats which came to me over the bay, and the bare-legged daughters of the cotter were wading by the pier. The same day we visited the shores of the isle in the ship's boats ; rowed deep into Fiddler's Hole, sounding as we went ; and having taken stock of all possible accommodation, pitched on the northern inlet as the scene of operations. For it was no

accident that had brought the lighthouse steamer to anchor in the Bay of Earraid. Fifteen miles away to seaward, a certain black rock stood environed by the Atlantic rollers, the outpost of the Torran reefs. Here was a tower to be built, and a star lighted, for the conduct of seamen. But as the rock was small, and hard of access, and far from land, the work would be one of years; and my father was now looking for a shore station, where the stones might be quarried and dressed, the men live, and the tender, with some degree of safety, lie at anchor.

I saw Earraid next from the stern thwart of an Iona lugger, Sam Bough and I sitting there cheek by jowl, with our feet upon our baggage, in a beautiful, clear, northern summer eve. And behold! there was now a pier of stone, there were rows of sheds, railways, travelling-cranes, a street of cottages, an iron house for the resident engineer, wooden bothies for the men; a stage where the courses of the tower were put together experimentally, and behind the settlement a

great gash in the hillside where granite was quarried. In the bay, the steamer lay at her moorings. All day long there hung about the place the music of chinking tools ; and even in the dead of night, the watchman carried his lantern to and fro in the dark settlement, and could light the pipe of any midnight muser. It was, above all, strange to see Earraid on the Sunday, when the sound of the tools ceased and there fell a crystal quiet. All about the green compound men would be sauntering in their Sunday's best, walking with those lax joints of the reposing toiler, thoughtfully smoking, talking small, as if in honour of the stillness, or hearkening to the wailing of the gulls. And it was strange to see our Sabbath services, held, as they were, in one of the bothies, with Mr. Brebner reading at a table, and the congregation perched about in the double tier of sleeping bunks ; and to hear the singing of the psalms, "the chapters," the inevitable Spurgeon's sermon, and the old, eloquent lighthouse prayer.

In fine weather, when by the spy-glass on the hill the sea was observed to run low upon the reef, there would be a sound of preparation in the very early morning ; and before the sun had risen from behind Ben More, the tender would steam out of the bay. Over fifteen sea-miles of the great blue Atlantic rollers she ploughed her way, trailing at her tail a brace of wallowing stone-lighters. The open ocean widened upon either board, and the hills of the mainland began to go down on the horizon, before she came to her unhomely destination, and lay-to at last where the rock clapped its black head above the swell, with the tall iron barrack on its spider legs, and the truncated tower, and the cranes waving their arms, and the smoke of the engine-fire rising in the mid-sea. An ugly reef is this of the Dhu Heartach ; no pleasant assemblage of shelves, and pools, and creeks, about which a child might play for a whole summer without weariness, like the Bell Rock or the Skerryvore, but one oval nodule of black-trap, sparsely bedabbled

with an inconspicuous fucus, and alive in every crevice with a dingy insect between a slater and a bug. No other life was there but that of sea-birds, and of the sea itself, that here ran like a mill-race, and growled about the outer reef for ever, and ever and again, in the calmest weather, roared and spouted on the rock itself. Times were different upon Dhu Heartach when it blew, and the night fell dark, and the neighbour lights of Skerryvore and Rhu-val were quenched in fog, and the men sat prisoned high up in their iron drum, that then resounded with the lashing of the sprays. Fear sat with them in their sea-beleaguered dwelling; and the colour changed in anxious faces when some greater billow struck the barrack, and its pillars quivered and sprang under the blow. It was then that the foreman builder, Mr. Goodwillie, whom I see before me still in his rock-habit of undecipherable rags, would get his fiddle down and strike up human minstrelsy amid the music of the storm. But it was in sunshine only

that I saw Dhu-Heartach; and it was in sunshine, or the yet lovelier summer afterglow, that the steamer would return to Earraid, ploughing an enchanted sea; the obedient lighters, relieved of their deck cargo, riding in her wake more quietly; and the steersman upon each, as she rose on the long swell, standing tall and dark against the shining west.

## II

But it was in Earraid itself that I delighted chiefly. The lighthouse settlement scarce encroached beyond its fences; over the top of the first brae the ground was all virgin, the world all shut out, the face of things unchanged by any of man's doings. Here was no living presence, save for the limpets on the rocks, for some old, gray, rain-beaten ram that I might rouse out of a ferny den betwixt two boulders, or for the haunting and the piping of the gulls. It was older than man; it was found so by incoming Celts, and seafaring Norsemen, and Columba's

priests. The earthy savour of the bog plants, the rude disorder of the boulders, the inimitable seaside brightness of the air, the brine and the iodine, the lap of the billows among the weedy reefs, the sudden springing up of a great run of dashing surf along the sea-front of the isle, all that I saw and felt my predecessors must have seen and felt with scarce a difference. I steeped myself in open air and in past ages.

“Delightful would it be to me to be in *Uchd Ailium*  
On the pinnacle of a rock,  
That I might often see  
The face of the ocean ;  
That I might hear the song of the wonderful birds,  
Source of happiness ;  
That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves  
Upon the rocks :  
At times at work without compulsion—  
This would be delightful ;  
At times plucking dulse from the rocks ;  
At times at fishing.”

So, about the next island of Iona, sang Columba himself twelve hundred years before.  
And so might I have sung of Earraid.

And all the while I was aware that this



life of sea-bathing and sun-burning was for me but a holiday. In that year cannon were roaring for days together on French battlefields; and I would sit in my isle (I call it mine, after the use of lovers) and think upon the war, and the loudness of these far-away battles, and the pain of the men's wounds, and the weariness of their marching. And I would think too of that other war which is as old as mankind, and is indeed the life of man: the unsparing war, the grinding slavery of competition; the toil of seventy years, dear-bought bread, precarious honour, the perils and pitfalls, and the poor rewards. It was a long look forward; the future summoned me as with trumpet calls, it warned me back as with a voice of weeping and beseeching; and I thrilled and trembled on the brink of life, like a childish bather on the beach.

There was another young man on Earraid in these days, and we were much together, bathing, clambering on the boulders, trying to sail a boat and spinning round instead in the

oily whirlpools of the roost. But the most part of the time we spoke of the great uncharted desert of our futures; wondering together what should there befall us; hearing with surprise the sound of our own voices in the empty vestibule of youth. As far, and as hard, as it seemed then to look forward to the grave, so far it seems now to look backward upon these emotions; so hard to recall justly that loath submission, as of the sacrificial bull, with which we stooped our necks under the yoke of destiny. I met my old companion but the other day; I cannot tell of course what he was thinking; but, upon my part, I was wondering to see us both so much at home, and so composed and sedentary in the world; and how much we had gained, and how much we had lost, to attain to that composure; and which had been upon the whole our best estate: when we sat there prating sensibly like men of some experience, or when we shared our timorous and hopeful counsels in a western islet.

## IX

### THOMAS STEVENSON

CIVIL ENGINEER

THE death of Thomas Stevenson will mean not very much to the general reader. His service to mankind took on forms of which the public knows little and understands less. He came seldom to London, and then only as a task, remaining always a stranger and a convinced provincial; putting up for years at the same hotel where his father had gone before him; faithful for long to the same restaurant, the same church, and the same theatre, chosen simply for propinquity; steadfastly refusing to dine out. He had a circle of his own, indeed, at home; few men were more be-

loved in Edinburgh, where he breathed an air that pleased him ; and wherever he went, in railway carriages or hotel smoking-rooms, his strange, humorous vein of talk, and his transparent honesty, raised him up friends and admirers. But to the general public and the world of London, except about the parliamentary committee-rooms, he remained unknown. All the time, his lights were in every part of the world, guiding the mariner ; his firm were consulting engineers to the Indian, the New Zealand, and the Japanese Lighthouse Boards, so that Edinburgh was a world centre for that branch of applied science ; in Germany, he had been called "the Nestor of lighthouse illumination ;" even in France, where his claims were long denied, he was at last, on the occasion of the late Exposition, recognised and medalled. And to show by one instance the inverted nature of his reputation, comparatively small at home, yet filling the world, a friend of mine was this winter on a visit to the Spanish main, and was asked by a Peruvian

if he "knew Mr. Stevenson the author, because his works were much esteemed in Peru?" My friend supposed the reference was to the writer of tales; but the Peruvian had never heard of *Dr. Jekyll*; what he had in his eye, what was esteemed in Peru, were the volumes of the engineer.

Thomas Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in the year 1818, the grandson of Thomas Smith, first engineer to the Board of Northern Lights, son of Robert Stevenson, brother of Alan and David; so that his nephew, David Alan Stevenson, joined with him at the time of his death in the engineership, is the sixth of the family who has held, successively or conjointly, that office. The Bell Rock, his father's great triumph, was finished before he was born; but he served under his brother Alan in the building of Skerryvore, the noblest of all extant deep-sea lights; and, in conjunction with his brother David, he added two—the Chickens and Dhu Heartach—to that small number of man's extreme outposts in the ocean. Of shore lights, the

two brothers last named erected no fewer than twenty-seven; of beacons,<sup>1</sup> about twenty-five. Many harbours were successfully carried out: one, the harbour of Wick, the chief disaster of my father's life, was a failure; the sea proved too strong for man's arts; and after expedients hitherto unthought of, and on a scale hyper-cyclopean, the work must be deserted, and now stands a ruin in that bleak, God-forsaken bay, ten miles from John-o'-Groat's. In the improvement of rivers the brothers were likewise in a large way of practice over both England and Scotland, nor had any British engineer anything approaching their experience.

It was about this nucleus of his professional labours that all my father's scientific inquiries and inventions centred; these proceeded from, and acted back upon, his daily business. Thus it was as a harbour engineer that he became interested in the propagation

<sup>1</sup> In Dr. Murray's admirable new dictionary, I have remarked a flaw *sub voce* Beacon. In its express, technical sense, a beacon may be defined as "a founded, artificial sea-mark, not lighted."

and reduction of waves ; a difficult subject in regard to which he has left behind him much suggestive matter and some valuable approximate results. Storms were his sworn adversaries, and it was through the study of storms that he approached that of meteorology at large. Many who knew him not otherwise, knew — perhaps have in their gardens — his louvre-boarded screen for instruments. But the great achievement of his life was, of course, in optics as applied to lighthouse illumination. Fresnel had done much ; Fresnel had settled the fixed light apparatus on a principle that still seems unimprovable ; and when Thomas Stevenson stepped in and brought to a comparable perfection the revolving light, a not unnatural jealousy and much painful controversy rose in France. It had its hour ; and, as I have told already, even in France it has blown by. Had it not, it would have mattered the less, since all through his life my father continued to justify his claim by fresh advances. New apparatus for lights in

new situations was continually being designed with the same unwearied search after perfection, the same nice ingenuity of means; and though the holophotal revolving light perhaps still remains his most elegant contrivance, it is difficult to give it the palm over the much later condensing system, with its thousand possible modifications. The number and the value of these improvements entitle their author to the name of one of mankind's benefactors. In all parts of the world a safer landfall awaits the mariner. Two things must be said: and, first, that Thomas Stevenson was no mathematician. Natural shrewdness, a sentiment of optical laws, and a great intensity of consideration led him to just conclusions; but to calculate the necessary formulæ for the instruments he had conceived was often beyond him, and he must fall back on the help of others, notably on that of his cousin and lifelong intimate friend, *emeritus* Professor Swan, of St. Andrews, and his later friend, Professor P. G. Tait. It is a curious enough circum-



stance, and a great encouragement to others, that a man so ill equipped should have succeeded in one of the most abstract and arduous walks of applied science. The second remark is one that applies to the whole family, and only particularly to Thomas Stevenson from the great number and importance of his inventions: holding as the Stevensons did a Government appointment, they regarded their original work as something due already to the nation, and none of them has ever taken out a patent. It is another cause of the comparative obscurity of the name: for a patent not only brings in money, it infallibly spreads reputation; and my father's instruments enter anonymously into a hundred light-rooms, and are passed anonymously over in a hundred reports, where the least considerable patent would stand out and tell its author's story.

But the life-work of Thomas Stevenson remains; what we have lost, what we now rather try to recall, is the friend and companion. He was a man of a somewhat

antique strain : with a blended sternness and softness that was wholly Scottish and at first somewhat bewildering ; with a profound essential melancholy of disposition and (what often accompanies it) the most humorous geniality in company ; shrewd and childish ; passionately attached, passionately prejudiced ; a man of many extremes, many faults of temper, and no very stable foothold for himself among life's troubles. Yet he was a wise adviser ; many men, and these not inconsiderable, took counsel with him habitually. "I sat at his feet," writes one of these, "when I asked his advice, and when the broad brow was set in thought and the firm mouth said his say, I always knew that no man could add to the worth of the conclusion." He had excellent taste, though whimsical and partial ; collected old furniture and delighted specially in sunflowers long before the days of Mr. Wilde ; took a lasting pleasure in prints and pictures ; was a devout admirer of Thomson of Duddingston at a time when few shared the taste ;

and though he read little, was constant to his favourite books. He had never any Greek ; Latin he happily re-taught himself after he had left school, where he was a mere consistent idler : happily, I say, for Lactantius, Vossius, and Cardinal Bona were his chief authors. The first he must have read for twenty years uninterruptedly, keeping it near him in his study, and carrying it in his bag on journeys. Another old theologian, Brown of Wamphray, was often in his hands. When he was indisposed, he had two books, *Guy Mannering* and *The Parent's Assistant*, of which he never wearied. He was a strong Conservative, or, as he preferred to call himself, a Tory ; except in so far as his views were modified by a hot-headed chivalrous sentiment for women. He was actually in favour of a marriage law under which any woman might have a divorce for the asking, and no man on any ground whatever ; and the same sentiment found another expression in a Magdalen Mission in Edinburgh, founded and largely

supported by himself. This was but one of the many channels of his public generosity : his private was equally unstrained. The Church of Scotland, of which he held the doctrines (though in a sense of his own) and to which he bore a clansman's loyalty, profited often by his time and money ; and though, from a morbid sense of his own unworthiness, he would never consent to be an office-bearer, his advice was often sought, and he served the Church on many committees. What he perhaps valued highest in his work were his contributions to the defence of Christianity ; one of which, in particular, was praised by Hutchinson Stirling and reprinted at the request of Professor Crawford.

His sense of his own unworthiness I have called morbid ; morbid, too, were his sense of the fleetingness of life and his concern for death. He had never accepted the conditions of man's life or his own character ; and his inmost thoughts were ever tinged with the Celtic melancholy. Cases of conscience were sometimes grievous to him, and

that delicate employment of a scientific witness cost him many qualms. But he found respite from these troublesome humours in his work, in his lifelong study of natural science, in the society of those he loved, and in his daily walks, which now would carry him far into the country with some congenial friend, and now keep him dangling about the town from one old book-shop to another, and scraping romantic acquaintance with every dog that passed. His talk, compounded of so much sterling sense and so much freakish humour, and clothed in language so apt, droll, and emphatic, was a perpetual delight to all who knew him before the clouds began to settle on his mind. His use of language was both just and picturesque ; and when at the beginning of his illness he began to feel the ebbing of this power, it was strange and painful to hear him reject one word after another as inadequate, and at length desist from the search and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety. It was perhaps another

Celtic trait that his affections and emotions, passionate as these were, and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races. For all these emotional extremes, and in spite of the melancholy ground of his character, he had upon the whole a happy life; nor was he less fortunate in his death, which at the last came to him unaware.



## X

### TALK AND TALKERS

Sir, we had a good talk.—JOHNSON.

As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence.—FRANKLIN.

#### I

THERE can be no fairer ambition than to excel in talk ; to be affable, gay, ready, clear and welcome ; to have a fact, a thought, or an illustration, pat to every subject ; and not only to cheer the flight of time among our intimates, but bear our part in that great international congress, always sitting, where public wrongs are first declared, public errors first corrected, and the course of public opinion shaped, day by day, a little nearer to the right. No measure comes before

Parliament but it has been long ago prepared by the grand jury of the talkers; no book is written that has not been largely composed by their assistance. Literature in many of its branches is no other than the shadow of good talk; but the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom and effect. There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually "in further search and progress;" while written words remain fixed, become idols even to the writer, found wooden dogmatisms, and preserve flies of obvious error in the amber of the truth. Last and chief, while literature, gagged with linsey-woolsey, can only deal with a fraction of the life of man, talk goes fancy free and may call a spade a spade. Talk has none of the freezing immunities of the pulpit. It cannot, even if it would, become merely æsthetic or merely classical like literature. A jest intervenes, the solemn humbug is dissolved in laughter, and speech runs forth



out of the contemporary groove into the open fields of nature, cheery and cheering, like schoolboys out of school. And it is in talk alone that we can learn our period and ourselves. In short, the first duty of a man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world; and talk, which is the harmonious speech of two or more, is by far the most accessible of pleasures. It costs nothing in money; it is all profit; it completes our education, founds and fosters our friendships, and can be enjoyed at any age and in almost any state of health.

The spice of life is battle; the friendliest relations are still a kind of contest; and if we would not forego all that is valuable in our lot, we must continually face some other person, eye to eye, and wrestle a fall whether in love or enmity. It is still by force of body, or power of character or intellect, that we attain to worthy pleasures. Men and women contend for each other in the lists of love, like rival mesmerists; the active and adroit decide their challenges in the sports of the body;

and the sedentary sit down to chess or conversation. All sluggish and pacific pleasures are, to the same degree, solitary and selfish ; and every durable bond between human beings is founded in or heightened by some element of competition. Now, the relation that has the least root in matter is undoubtedly that airy one of friendship ; and hence, I suppose, it is that good talk most commonly arises among friends. Talk is, indeed, both the scene and instrument of friendship. It is in talk alone that the friends can measure strength, and enjoy that amicable counter-assertion of personality which is the gauge of relations and the sport of life.

A good talk is not to be had for the asking. Humours must first be accorded in a kind of overture or prologue ; hour, company and circumstance be suited ; and then, at a fit juncture, the subject, the quarry of two heated minds, spring up like a deer out of the wood. Not that the talker has any of the hunter's pride, though he has all and

more than all his ardour. The genuine artist follows the stream of conversation as an angler follows the windings of a brook, not dallying where he fails to "kill." He trusts implicitly to hazard; and he is rewarded by continual variety, continual pleasure, and those changing prospects of the truth that are the best of education. There is nothing in a subject, so called, that we should regard it as an idol, or follow it beyond the promptings of desire. Indeed, there are few subjects; and so far as they are truly talkable, more than the half of them may be reduced to three: that I am I, that you are you, and that there are other people dimly understood to be not quite the same as either. Wherever talk may range, it still runs half the time on these eternal lines. The theme being set, each plays on himself as on an instrument; asserts and justifies himself; ransacks his brain for instances and opinions, and brings them forth new-minted, to his own surprise and the admiration of his adversary.

All natural talk is a festival of ostentation ; and by the laws of the game each accepts and fans the vanity of the other. It is from that reason that we venture to lay ourselves so open, that we dare to be so warmly eloquent, and that we swell in each other's eyes to such a vast proportion. For talkers, once launched, begin to overflow the limits of their ordinary selves, tower up to the height of their secret pretensions, and give themselves out for the heroes, brave, pious, musical and wise, that in their most shining moments they aspire to be. So they weave for themselves with words and for a while inhabit a palace of delights, temple at once and theatre, where they fill the round of the world's dignities, and feast with the gods, exulting in Kudos. And when the talk is over, each goes his way, still flushed with vanity and admiration, still trailing clouds of glory ; each declines from the height of his ideal orgie, not in a moment, but by slow declension. I remember, in the *entr'acte* of an afternoon performance, coming forth into the sunshine, in a

beautiful green, gardened corner of a romantic city ; and as I sat and smoked, the music moving in my blood, I seemed to sit there and evaporate *The Flying Dutchman* (for it was that I had been hearing) with a wonderful sense of life, warmth, well-being and pride ; and the noises of the city, voices, bells and marching feet, fell together in my ears like a symphonious orchestra. In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, and the physical earth swimming around you with the colours of the sunset.

Natural talk, like ploughing, should turn up a large surface of life, rather than dig mines into geological strata. Masses of experience, anecdote, incident, cross-lights, quotation, historical instances, the whole flotsam and jetsam of two minds forced in and in upon the matter in hand from every point of the compass, and from every degree of mental elevation and abasement—these are the material with which talk is fortified,

the food on which the talkers thrive. Such argument as is proper to the exercise should still be brief and seizing. Talk should proceed by instances ; by the apposite, not the expository. It should keep close along the lines of humanity, near the bosoms and businesses of men, at the level where history, fiction and experience intersect and illuminate each other. I am I, and You are You, with all my heart ; but conceive how these lean propositions change and brighten when, instead of words, the actual you and I sit cheek by jowl, the spirit housed in the live body, and the very clothes uttering voices to corroborate the story in the face. Not less surprising is the change when we leave off to speak of generalities—the bad, the good, the miser, and all the characters of Theophrastus—and call up other men, by anecdote or instance, in their very trick and feature ; or trading on a common knowledge, toss each other famous names, still glowing with the hues of life. Communication is no longer by words, but

by the instancing of whole biographies, epics, systems of philosophy, and epochs of history, in bulk. That which is understood excels that which is spoken in quantity and quality alike; ideas thus figured and personified, change hands, as we may say, like coin; and the speakers imply without effort the most obscure and intricate thoughts. Strangers who have a large common ground of reading will, for this reason, come the sooner to the grapple of genuine converse. If they know Othello and Napoleon, Consuelo and Clarissa Harlowe, Vautrin and Steenie Steenson, they can leave generalities and begin at once to speak by figures.

Conduct and art are the two subjects that arise most frequently and that embrace the widest range of facts. A few pleasures bear discussion for their own sake, but only those which are most social or most radically human; and even these can only be discussed among their devotees. A technicality is always welcome to the expert, whether in athletics, art or law; I have heard the best

kind of talk on technicalities from such rare and happy persons as both know and love their business. No human being ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes me suspect we hear too much of it in literature. The weather is regarded as the very nadir and scoff of conversational topics. And yet the weather, the dramatic element in scenery, is far more tractable in language, and far more human both in import and suggestion than the stable features of the landscape. Sailors and shepherds, and the people generally of coast and mountain, talk well of it; and it is often excitingly presented in literature. But the tendency of all living talk draws it back and back into the common focus of humanity. Talk is a creature of the street and marketplace, feeding on gossip; and its last resort is still in a discussion on morals. That is the heroic form of gossip; heroic in virtue of its high pretensions; but still gossip, because it turns on personalities. You can keep no men long, nor Scotchmen at all, off moral or



theological discussion. These are to all the world what law is to lawyers ; they are everybody's technicalities ; the medium through which all consider life, and the dialect in which they express their judgments. I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two months in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather ; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wandered that whole time beyond two subjects—theology and love. And perhaps neither a court of love nor an assembly of divines would have granted their premisses or welcomed their conclusions.

Conclusions, indeed, are not often reached by talk any more than by private thinking. That is not the profit. The profit is in the exercise, and above all in the experience ; for when we reason at large on any subject, we review our state and history in life. From time to time, however, and specially, I think, in talking art, talk becomes effective, conquering like war, widening the boundaries of knowledge like an exploration. A

point arises ; the question takes a problematical, a baffling, yet a likely air ; the talkers begin to feel lively presentiments of some conclusion near at hand ; towards this they strive with emulous ardour, each by his own path, and struggling for first utterance ; and then one leaps upon the summit of that matter with a shout, and almost at the same moment the other is beside him ; and behold they are agreed. Like enough, the progress is illusory, a mere cat's cradle having been wound and unwound out of words. But the sense of joint discovery is none the less giddy and inspiriting. And in the life of the talker such triumphs, though imaginary, are neither few nor far apart ; they are attained with speed and pleasure, in the hour of mirth ; and by the nature of the process, they are always worthily shared.

There is a certain attitude, combative at once and deferential, eager to fight yet most averse to quarrel, which marks out at once the talkable man. It is not eloquence, not fairness, not obstinacy, but a

certain proportion of all of these that I love to encounter in my amicable adversaries. They must not be pontiffs holding doctrine, but huntsmen questing after elements of truth. Neither must they be boys to be instructed, but fellow-teachers with whom I may wrangle and agree on equal terms. We must reach some solution, some shadow of consent ; for without that, eager talk becomes a torture. But we do not wish to reach it cheaply, or quickly, or without the tussle and effort wherein pleasure lies.

The very best talker, with me, is one whom I shall call Spring-Heel'd Jack. I say so, because I never knew any one who mingled so largely the possible ingredients of converse. In the Spanish proverb, the fourth man necessary to compound a salad, is a madman to mix it : Jack is that madman. I know not which is more remarkable ; the insane lucidity of his conclusions, the humorous eloquence of his language, or his power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject treated,

mixing the conversational salad like a drunken god. He doubles like the serpent, changes and flashes like the shaken kaleidoscope, transmigrates bodily into the views of others, and so, in the twinkling of an eye and with a heady rapture, turns questions inside out and flings them empty before you on the ground, like a triumphant conjuror. It is my common practice when a piece of conduct puzzles me, to attack it in the presence of Jack with such grossness, such partiality and such wearing iteration, as at length shall spur him up in its defence. In a moment he transmigrates, dons the required character, and with moonstruck philosophy justifies the act in question. I can fancy nothing to compare with the *vim* of these impersonations, the strange scale of language, flying from Shakespeare to Kant, and from Kant to Major Dyngwell—

“As fast as a musician scatters sounds  
Out of an instrument—”

the sudden, sweeping generalisations, the absurd irrelevant particularities, the wit,

wisdom, folly, humour, eloquence and bathos, each startling in its kind, and yet all luminous in the admired disorder of their combination. A talker of a different calibre, though belonging to the same school, is Burly. Burly is a man of a great presence; he commands a larger atmosphere, gives the impression of a grosser mass of character than most men. It has been said of him that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfold; and the same, I think, has been said of other powerful constitutions condemned to much physical inaction. There is something boisterous and piratic in Burly's manner of talk which suits well enough with this impression. He will roar you down, he will bury his face in his hands, he will undergo passions of revolt and agony; and meanwhile his attitude of mind is really both conciliatory and receptive; and after Pistol has been out-Pistol'd, and the welkin rung for hours, you begin to perceive a certain subsidence in these spring torrents, points of agreement issue, and you

end arm-in-arm, and in a glow of mutual admiration. The outcry only serves to make your final union the more unexpected and precious. Throughout there has been perfect sincerity, perfect intelligence, a desire to hear although not always to listen, and an unaffected eagerness to meet concessions. You have, with Burly, none of the dangers that attend debate with Spring-Heel'd Jack ; who may at any moment turn his powers of transmigration on yourself, create for you a view you never held, and then furiously fall on you for holding it. These, at least, are my two favourites, and both are loud, copious, intolerant talkers. This argues that I myself am in the same category ; for if we love talking at all, we love a bright, fierce adversary, who will hold his ground, foot by foot, in much our own manner, sell his attention dearly, and give us our full measure of the dust and exertion of battle. Both these men can be beat from a position, but it takes six hours to do it ; a high and hard adventure, worth attempting. With

both you can pass days in an enchanted country of the mind, with people, scenery and manners of its own ; live a life apart, more arduous, active and glowing than any real existence ; and come forth again when the talk is over, as out of a theatre or a dream, to find the east wind still blowing and the chimney-pots of the old battered city still around you. Jack has the far finer mind, Burly the far more honest ; Jack gives us the animated poetry, Burly the romantic prose, of similar themes ; the one glances high like a meteor and makes a light in darkness ; the other, with many changing hues of fire, burns at the sea-level, like a conflagration ; but both have the same humour and artistic interests, the same unquenched ardour in pursuit, the same gusts of talk and thunderclaps of contradiction.

Cockshot<sup>1</sup> is a different article, but vastly entertaining, and has been meat and drink to me for many a long evening. His manner is dry, brisk and pertinacious,

<sup>1</sup> The late Fleeming Jenkin.

and the choice of words not much. The point about him is his extraordinary readiness and spirit. You can propound nothing but he has either a theory about it ready-made, or will have one instantly on the stocks, and proceed to lay its timbers and launch it in your presence. "Let me see," he will say. "Give me a moment. I *should* have some theory for that." A blither spectacle than the vigour with which he sets about the task, it were hard to fancy. He is possessed by a demoniac energy, welding the elements for his life, and bending ideas, as an athlete bends a horseshoe, with a visible and lively effort. He has, in theorising, a compass, an art; what I would call the synthetic gusto; something of a Herbert Spencer, who should see the fun of the thing. You are not bound, and no more is he, to place your faith in these brand-new opinions. But some of them are right enough, durable even for life; and the poorest serve for a cock-shy—as when idle people, after picnics, float a bottle on a pond



and have an hour's diversion ere it sinks. Whichever they are, serious opinions or humours of the moment, he still defends his ventures with indefatigable wit and spirit, hitting savagely himself, but taking punishment like a man. He knows and never forgets that people talk, first of all, for the sake of talking; conducts himself in the ring, to use the old slang, like a thorough "glutton," and honestly enjoys a telling facer from his adversary. Cockshot is bottled effervescency, the sworn foe of sleep. Three-in-the-morning Cockshot, says a victim. His talk is like the driest of all imaginable dry champagnes. Sleight of hand and inimitable quickness are the qualities by which he lives. Athelred, on the other hand, presents you with the spectacle of a sincere and somewhat slow nature thinking aloud. He is the most unready man I ever knew to shine in conversation. You may see him sometimes wrestle with a refractory jest for a minute or two together, and perhaps fail to throw it in the end. And

there is something singularly engaging, often instructive, in the simplicity with which he thus exposes the process as well as the result, the works as well as the dial of the clock. Withal he has his hours of inspiration. Apt words come to him as if by accident, and, coming from deeper down, they smack the more personally, they have the more of fine old crusted humanity, rich in sediment and humour. There are sayings of his in which he has stamped himself into the very grain of the language; you would think he must have worn the words next his skin and slept with them. Yet it is not as a sayer of particular good things that Athelred is most to be regarded, rather as the stalwart woodman of thought. I have pulled on a light cord often enough, while he has been wielding the broad-axe; and between us, on this unequal division, many a specious fallacy has fallen. I have known him to battle the same question night after night for years, keeping it in the reign of talk, constantly applying it and re-applying

it to life with humorous or grave intention, and all the while, never hurrying, nor flagging, nor taking an unfair advantage of the facts. Jack at a given moment, when arising, as it were, from the tripod, can be more radiantly just to those from whom he differs; but then the tenor of his thoughts is even calumnious; while Athelred, slower to forge excuses, is yet slower to condemn, and sits over the welter of the world, vacillating but still judicial, and still faithfully contending with his doubts.

Both the last talkers deal much in points of conduct and religion studied in the "dry light" of prose. Indirectly and as if against his will the same elements from time to time appear in the troubled and poetic talk of Opalstein. His various and exotic knowledge, complete although unready sympathies, and fine, full, discriminative flow of language, fit him out to be the best of talkers; so perhaps he is with some, not *quite* with me — *proxime accessit*, I should say. He sings the praises of the earth and the arts, flowers

and jewels, wine and music, in a moonlight, serenading manner, as to the light guitar; even wisdom comes from his tongue like singing; no one is, indeed, more tuneful in the upper notes. But even while he sings the song of the Sirens, he still hearkens to the barking of the Sphinx. Jarring Byronic notes interrupt the flow of his Horatian humours. His mirth has something of the tragedy of the world for its perpetual background; and he feasts like Don Giovanni to a double orchestra, one lightly sounding for the dance, one pealing Beethoven in the distance. He is not truly reconciled either with life or with himself; and this instant war in his members sometimes divides the man's attention. He does not always, perhaps not often, frankly surrender himself in conversation. He brings into the talk other thoughts than those which he expresses; you are conscious that he keeps an eye on something else, that he does not shake off the world, nor quite forget himself. Hence arise occasional disappointments; even an occa-

sional unfairness for his companions, who find themselves one day giving too much, and the next, when they are wary out of season, giving perhaps too little. Purcel is in another class from any I have mentioned. He is no debater, but appears in conversation, as occasion rises, in two distinct characters, one of which I admire and fear, and the other love. In the first, he is radiantly civil and rather silent, sits on a high, courtly hilltop, and from that vantage-ground drops you his remarks like favours. He seems not to share in our sublunary contentions; he wears no sign of interest; when on a sudden there falls, in a crystal of wit, so polished that the dull do not perceive it, but so right that the sensitive are silenced. True talk should have more body and blood, should be louder, vainer and more declaratory of the man; the true talker should not hold so steady an advantage over whom he speaks with; and that is one reason out of a score why I prefer my Purcel in his second character, when he

unbends into a strain of graceful gossip, singing like the fireside kettle. In these moods he has an elegant homeliness that rings of the true Queen Anne. I know another person who attains, in his moments, to the insolence of a Restoration comedy, speaking, I declare, as Congreve wrote ; but that is a sport of nature, and scarce falls under the rubric, for there is none, alas ! to give him answer.

One last remark occurs : It is the mark of genuine conversation that the sayings can scarce be quoted with their full effect beyond the circle of common friends. To have their proper weight they should appear in a biography, and with the portrait of the speaker. Good talk is dramatic ; it is like an impromptu piece of acting where each should represent himself to the greatest advantage ; and that is the best kind of talk where each speaker is most fully and candidly himself, and where, if you were to shift the speeches round from one to another, there would be the greatest loss in significance

and perspicuity. It is for this reason that talk depends so wholly on our company. We should like to introduce Falstaff and Mercutio, or Falstaff and Sir Toby; but Falstaff in talk with Cordelia seems even painful. Most of us, by the Protean quality of man, can talk to some degree with all; but the true talk, that strikes out all the slumbering best of us, comes only with the peculiar brethren of our spirits, is founded as deep as love in the constitution of our being, and is a thing to relish with all our energy, while yet we have it, and to be grateful for for ever.



## XI

### TALK AND TALKERS<sup>1</sup>

## II

IN the last paper there was perhaps too much about mere debate ; and there was nothing said at all about that kind of talk which is merely luminous and restful, a higher power of silence, the quiet of the evening shared by ruminating friends. There is something, aside from personal preference, to be alleged in support of this omission. Those who are no chimney-cornerers, who rejoice in the social thunderstorm, have a ground in reason for their choice. They get little rest indeed ; but restfulness is a quality

<sup>1</sup> This sequel was called forth by an excellent article in *The Spectator*.



for cattle ; the virtues are all active, life is alert, and it is in repose that men prepare themselves for evil. On the other hand, they are bruised into a knowledge of themselves and others ; they have in a high degree the fencer's pleasure in dexterity displayed and proved ; what they get they get upon life's terms, paying for it as they go ; and once the talk is launched, they are assured of honest dealing from an adversary eager like themselves. The aboriginal man within us, the cave-dweller, still lusty as when he fought tooth and nail for roots and berries, scents this kind of equal battle from afar ; it is like his old primæval days upon the crags, a return to the sincerity of savage life from the comfortable fictions of the civilised. And if it be delightful to the Old Man, it is none the less profitable to his younger brother, the conscientious gentleman. I feel never quite sure of your urbane and smiling coteries ; I fear they indulge a man's vanities in silence, suffer him to encroach, encourage him on to be an ass, and

send him forth again, not merely contemned for the moment, but radically more contemptible than when he entered. But if I have a flushed, blustering fellow for my opposite, bent on carrying a point, my vanity is sure to have its ears rubbed, once at least, in the course of the debate. He will not spare me when we differ ; he will not fear to demonstrate my folly to my face.

For many natures there is not much charm in the still, chambered society, the circle of bland countenances, the digestive silence, the admired remark, the flutter of affectionate approval. They demand more atmosphere and exercise ; "a gale upon their spirits," as our pious ancestors would phrase it ; to have their wits well breathed in an uproarious Valhalla. And I suspect that the choice, given their character and faults, is one to be defended. The purely wise are silenced by facts ; they talk in a clear atmosphere, problems lying around them like a view in nature ; if they can be shown to be somewhat in the wrong, they digest

the reproof like a thrashing, and make better intellectual blood. They stand corrected by a whisper ; a word or a glance reminds them of the great eternal law. But it is not so with all. Others in conversation seek rather contact with their fellow-men than increase of knowledge or clarity of thought. The drama, not the philosophy, of life is the sphere of their intellectual activity. Even when they pursue truth, they desire as much as possible of what we may call human scenery along the road they follow. They dwell in the heart of life ; the blood sounding in their ears, their eyes laying hold of what delights them with a brutal avidity that makes them blind to all besides, their interest riveted on people, living, loving, talking, tangible people. To a man of this description, the sphere of argument seems very pale and ghostly. By a strong expression, a perturbed countenance, floods of tears, an insult which his conscience obliges him to swallow, he is brought round to knowledge which no syllogism would have

conveyed to him. His own experience is so vivid, he is so superlatively conscious of himself, that if, day after day, he is allowed to hector and hear nothing but approving echoes, he will lose his hold on the soberness of things and take himself in earnest for a god. Talk might be to such an one the very way of moral ruin ; the school where he might learn to be at once intolerable and ridiculous.

This character is perhaps commoner than philosophers suppose. And for persons of that stamp to learn much by conversation, they must speak with their superiors, not in intellect, for that is a superiority that must be proved, but in station. If they cannot find a friend to bully them for their good, they must find either an old man, a woman, or some one so far below them in the artificial order of society, that courtesy may be particularly exercised.

The best teachers are the aged. To the old our mouths are always partly closed ;

we must swallow our obvious retorts and listen. They sit above our heads, on life's raised dais, and appeal at once to our respect and pity. A flavour of the old school, a touch of something different in their manner—which is freer and rounder, if they come of what is called a good family, and often more timid and precise if they are of the middle class—serves, in these days, to accentuate the difference of age and add a distinction to gray hairs. But their superiority is founded more deeply than by outward marks or gestures. They are before us in the march of man; they have more or less solved the irking problem; they have battled through the equinox of life; in good and evil they have held their course; and now, without open shame, they near the crown and harbour. It may be we have been struck with one of fortune's darts; we can scarce be civil, so cruelly is our spirit tossed. Yet long before we were so much as thought upon, the like calamity befell the old man or woman that now, with pleasant

Humour, rallies us upon our inattention, sitting composed in the holy evening of man's life, in the clear shining after rain. We grow ashamed of our distresses, new and hot and coarse, like villainous roadside brandy; we see life in aerial perspective, under the heavens of faith; and out of the worst, in the mere presence of contented elders, look forward and take patience. Fear shrinks before them: "like a thing reprov'd," not the flitting and ineffectual fear of death, but the instant, dwelling terror of the responsibilities and revenges of life. Their speech, indeed, is timid; they report lions in the path; they counsel a meticulous footing; but their serene, marred faces are more eloquent and tell another story. Where they have gone, we will go also, not very greatly fearing; what they have endured unbroken, we also, God helping us, will make a shift to bear.

Not only is the presence of the aged in itself remedial, but their minds are stored with antidotes, wisdom's simples, plain considera-

tions overlooked by youth. They have matter to communicate, be they never so stupid. Their talk is not merely literature, it is great literature ; classic in virtue of the speaker's detachment, studded, like a book of travel, with things we should not otherwise have learnt. In virtue, I have said, of the speaker's detachment,—and this is why, of two old men, the one who is not your father speaks to you with the more sensible authority ; for in the paternal relation the oldest have lively interests and remain still young. Thus I have known two young men great friends ; each swore by the other's father ; the father of each swore by the other lad ; and yet each pair of parent and child were perpetually by the ears. This is typical : it reads like the germ of some kindly comedy.

The old appear in conversation in two characters : the critically silent and the garrulous anecdotic. The last is perhaps what we look for ; it is perhaps the more instructive. An old gentleman, well on in years, sits handsomely and naturally in the bow-

window of his age, scanning experience with reverted eye; and chirping and smiling, communicates the accidents and reads the lesson of his long career. Opinions are strengthened, indeed, but they are also weeded out in the course of years. What remains steadily present to the eye of the retired veteran in his hermitage, what still ministers to his content, what still quickens his old honest heart—these are “the real long-lived things” that Whitman tells us to prefer. Where youth agrees with age, not where they differ, wisdom lies; and it is when the young disciple finds his heart to beat in tune with his gray-bearded teacher’s that a lesson may be learned. I have known one old gentleman, whom I may name, for he is now gathered to his stock—Robert Hunter, Sheriff of Dumbarton, and author of an excellent law-book still re-edited and republished. Whether he was originally big or little is more than I can guess. When I knew him he was all fallen away and fallen in; crooked and shrunk; buckled into a stiff waistcoat for support; troubled by ail-




ments, which kept him hobbling in and out of the room ; one foot gouty ; a wig for decency, not for deception, on his head ; close shaved, except under his chin—and for that he never failed to apologise, for it went sore against the traditions of his life. You can imagine how he would fare in a novel by Miss Mather ; yet this rag of a Chelsea veteran lived to his last year in the plenitude of all that is best in man, brimming with human kindness, and staunch as a Roman soldier under his manifold infirmities. You could not say that he had lost his memory, for he would repeat Shakespeare and Webster and Jeremy Taylor and Burke by the page together ; but the parchment was filled up, there was no room for fresh inscriptions, and he was capable of repeating the same anecdote on many successive visits. His voice survived in its full power, and he took a pride in using it. On his last voyage as Commissioner of Lighthouses, he hailed a ship at sea and made himself clearly audible without a speaking trumpet, ruffling the while with a

proper vanity in his achievement. He had a habit of eking out his words with interrogative hems, which was puzzling and a little wearisome, suited ill with his appearance, and seemed a survival from some former stage of bodily portliness. Of yore, when he was a great pedestrian and no enemy to good claret, he may have pointed with these minute guns his allocutions to the bench. His humour was perfectly equable, set beyond the reach of fate; gout, rheumatism, stone and gravel might have combined their forces against that frail tabernacle, but when I came round on Sunday evening, he would lay aside Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ* and greet me with the same open brow, the same kind formality of manner. His opinions and sympathies dated the man almost to a decade. He had begun life, under his mother's influence, as an admirer of Junius, but on maturer knowledge had transferred his admiration to Burke. He cautioned me, with entire gravity, to be punctilious in writing English; never to forget that I was a Scotch-

man, that English was a foreign tongue, and that if I attempted the colloquial, I should certainly be shamed: the remark was apposite, I suppose, in the days of David Hume. Scott was too new for him; he had known the author—known him, too, for a Tory; and to the genuine classic a contemporary is always something of a trouble. He had the old, serious love of the play; had even, as he was proud to tell, played a certain part in the history of Shakespearian revivals, for he had successfully pressed on Murray, of the old Edinburgh Theatre, the idea of producing Shakespeare's fairy pieces with great scenic display. A moderate in religion, he was much struck in the last years of his life by a conversation with two young lads, revivalists. "H'm," he would say—"new to me. I have had—h'm—no such experience." It struck him, not with pain, rather with a solemn philosophic interest, that he, a Christian as he hoped, and a Christian of so old a standing, should hear these young fellows talking of his own subject, his own weapons that he

had fought the battle of life with,—“and—  
h’m—not understand.” In this wise and  
graceful attitude he did justice to himself and  
others, reposed unshaken in his old beliefs,  
and recognised their limits without anger or  
alarm. His last recorded remark, on the last  
night of his life, was after he had been arguing  
against Calvinism with his minister and was  
interrupted by an intolerable pang. “After  
all,” he said, “of all the ’isms, I know none  
so bad as rheumatism.” My own last sight  
of him was some time before, when we dined  
together at an inn; he had been on circuit,  
for he stuck to his duties like a chief part of  
his existence; and I remember it as the only  
occasion on which he ever soiled his lips with  
slang—a thing he loathed. We were both  
Roberts; and as we took our places at table,  
he addressed me with a twinkle: “We are  
just what you would call two bob.” He  
offered me port, I remember, as the proper  
milk of youth; spoke of “twenty-shilling  
notes;” and throughout the meal was full of  
old-world pleasantries and quaintness, like an



ancient boy on a holiday. But what I recall chiefly was his confession that he had never read *Othello* to an end. Shakespeare was his continual study. He loved nothing better than to display his knowledge and memory by adducing parallel passages from Shakespeare, passages where the same word was employed, or the same idea differently treated. But *Othello* had beaten him. "That noble gentleman and that noble lady—h'm—too painful for me." The same night the boardings were covered with posters, "Burlesque of *Othello*," and the contrast blazed up in my mind like a bonfire. An unforgettable look it gave me into that kind man's soul. His acquaintance was indeed a liberal and pious education. All the humanities were taught in that bare dining-room beside his gouty footstool. He was a piece of good advice; he was himself the instance that pointed and adorned his various talk. Nor could a young man have found elsewhere a place so set apart from envy, fear, discontent, or any of the passions that debase; a life so honest

and composed; a soul like an ancient violin, so subdued to harmony, responding to a touch in music—as in that dining-room, with Mr. Hunter chatting at the eleventh hour, under the shadow of eternity, fearless and gentle.

The second class of old people are not anecdotic; they are rather hearers than talkers, listening to the young with an amused and critical attention. To have this sort of intercourse to perfection, I think we must go to old ladies. Women are better hearers than men, to begin with; they learn, I fear in anguish, to bear with the tedious and infantile vanity of the other sex; and we will take more from a woman than even from the oldest man in the way of biting comment. Biting comment is the chief part, whether for profit or amusement, in this business. The old lady that I have in my eye is a very caustic speaker, her tongue, after years of practice, in absolute command, whether for silence or attack. If she chance to dislike you, you will be tempted to curse

the malignity of age. But if you chance to please even slightly, you will be listened to with a particular laughing grace of sympathy, and from time to time chastised, as if in play, with a parasol as heavy as a pole-axe. It requires a singular art, as well as the vantage-ground of age, to deal these stunning corrections among the coxcombs of the young. The pill is disguised in sugar of wit; it is administered as a compliment—if you had not pleased, you would not have been censured; it is a personal affair—a hyphen, a *trait d'union*, between you and your censor; age's philandering, for her pleasure and your good. Incontestably the young man feels very much of a fool; but he must be a perfect Malvolio, sick with self-love, if he cannot take an open buffet and still smile. The correction of silence is what kills; when you know you have transgressed, and your friend says nothing and avoids your eye. If a man were made of gutta-percha, his heart would quail at such a moment. But when the word is out, the

worst is over ; and a fellow with any good-humour at all may pass through a perfect hail of witty criticism, every bare place on his soul hit to the quick with a shrewd missile, and reappear, as if after a dive, tingling with a fine moral reaction, and ready, with a shrinking readiness, one-third loath, for a repetition of the discipline.

There are few women, not well sunned and ripened, and perhaps toughened, who can thus stand apart from a man and say the true thing with a kind of genial cruelty. Still there are some—and I doubt if there be any man who can return the compliment. The class of man represented by Vernon Whitford in *The Egoist* says, indeed, the true thing, but he says it stockishly. Vernon is a noble fellow, and makes, by the way, a noble and instructive contrast to Daniel Deronda ; his conduct is the conduct of a man of honour ; but we agree with him, against our consciences, when he remorsefully considers "its astonishing dryness." He is the best of men, but the best of women



manage to combine all that and something more. Their very faults assist them ; they are helped even by the falseness of their position in life. They can retire into the fortified camp of the proprieties. They can touch a subject and suppress it. The most adroit employ a somewhat elaborate reserve as a means to be frank, much as they wear gloves when they shake hands. But a man has the full responsibility of his freedom, cannot evade a question, can scarce be silent without rudeness, must answer for his words upon the moment, and is not seldom left face to face with a damning choice, between the more or less dishonourable wriggling of Deronda and the downright woodenness of Vernon Whitford.

But the superiority of women is perpetually menaced ; they do not sit throned on infirmities like the old ; they are suitors as well as sovereigns ; their vanity is engaged, their affections are too apt to follow ; and hence much of the talk between the sexes degenerates into something unworthy of the

name. The desire to please, to shine with a certain softness of lustre and to draw a fascinating picture of oneself, banishes from conversation all that is sterling and most of what is humorous. As soon as a strong current of mutual admiration begins to flow, the human interest triumphs entirely over the intellectual, and the commerce of words, consciously or not, becomes secondary to the commercing of eyes. But even where this ridiculous danger is avoided, and a man and woman converse equally and honestly, something in their nature or their education falsifies the strain. An instinct prompts them to agree; and where that is impossible, to agree to differ. Should they neglect the warning, at the first suspicion of an argument, they find themselves in different hemispheres. About any point of business or conduct, any actual affair demanding settlement, a woman will speak and listen, hear and answer arguments, not only with natural wisdom, but with candour and logical honesty. But if the subject of debate be

something in the air, an abstraction, an excuse for talk, a logical Aunt Sally, then may the male debater instantly abandon hope ; he may employ reason, adduce facts, be supple, be smiling, be angry, all shall avail him nothing ; what the woman said first, that (unless she has forgotten it) she will repeat at the end. Hence, at the very junctures when a talk between men grows brighter and quicker and begins to promise to bear fruit, talk between the sexes is menaced with dissolution. The point of difference, the point of interest, is evaded by the brilliant woman, under a shower of irrelevant conversational rockets ; it is bridged by the discreet woman with a rustle of silk, as she passes smoothly forward to the nearest point of safety. And this sort of prestidigitation, juggling the dangerous topic out of sight until it can be reintroduced with safety in an altered shape, is a piece of tactics among the true drawing-room queens.

The drawing-room is, indeed, an artificial place ; it is so by our choice and for our

sins. The subjection of women ; the ideal imposed upon them from the cradle, and worn, like a hair-shirt, with so much constancy ; their motherly, superior tenderness to man's vanity and self-importance ; their managing arts—the arts of a civilised slave among good-natured barbarians—are all painful ingredients and all help to falsify relations. It is not till we get clear of that amusing artificial scene that genuine relations are founded, or ideas honestly compared. In the garden, on the road or the hillside, or *tête-à-tête* and apart from interruptions, occasions arise when we may learn much from any single woman ; and nowhere more often than in married life. Marriage is one long conversation, chequered by disputes. The disputes are valueless ; they but ingrain the difference ; the heroic heart of woman prompting her at once to nail her colours to the mast. But in the intervals, almost unconsciously and with no desire to shine, the whole material of life is turned over and over, ideas are struck out and

shared, the two persons more and more adapt their notions one to suit the other, and in process of time, without sound of trumpet, they conduct each other into new worlds of thought.

## XII

### THE CHARACTER OF DOGS

THE civilisation, the manners, and the morals of dog-kind are to a great extent subordinated to those of his ancestral master, man. This animal, in many ways so superior, has accepted a position of inferiority, shares the domestic life, and humours the caprices of the tyrant. But the potentate, like the British in India, pays small regard to the character of his willing client, judges him with listless glances, and condemns him in a byword. Listless have been the looks of his admirers, who have exhausted idle terms of praise, and buried the poor soul below exaggerations. And yet more idle and, if possible, more unintelligent has been

the attitude of his express detractors ; those who are very fond of dogs "but in their proper place" ; who say "poo' fellow, poo' fellow," and are themselves far poorer ; who whet the knife of the vivisectionist or heat his oven ; who are not ashamed to admire "the creature's instinct" ; and flying far beyond folly, have dared to resuscitate the theory of animal machines. The "dog's instinct" and the "automaton-dog," in this age of psychology and science, sound like strange anachronisms. An automaton he certainly is ; a machine working independently of his control, the heart like the mill-wheel, keeping all in motion, and the consciousness, like a person shut in the mill garret, enjoying the view out of the window and shaken by the thunder of the stones ; an automaton in one corner of which a living spirit is confined : an automaton like man. Instinct again he certainly possesses. Inherited aptitudes are his, inherited frailties. Some things he at once views and understands, as though he were awakened from a sleep, as though he

came "trailing clouds of glory." But with him, as with man, the field of instinct is limited ; its utterances are obscure and occasional ; and about the far larger part of life both the dog and his master must conduct their steps by deduction and observation.

The leading distinction between dog and man, after and perhaps before the different duration of their lives, is that the one can speak and that the other cannot. The absence of the power of speech confines the dog in the development of his intellect. It hinders him from many speculations, for words are the beginning of metaphysic. At the same blow it saves him from many superstitions, and his silence has won for him a higher name for virtue than his conduct justifies. The faults of the dog are many. He is vainer than man, singularly greedy of notice, singularly intolerant of ridicule, suspicious like the deaf, jealous to the degree of frenzy, and radically devoid of truth. The day of an intelligent small dog is passed in the manufacture and the laborious communica-



tion of falsehood ; he lies with his tail, he lies with his eye, he lies with his protesting paw ; and when he rattles his dish or scratches at the door his purpose is other than appears. But he has some apology to offer for the vice. Many of the signs which form his dialect have come to bear an arbitrary meaning, clearly understood both by his master and himself ; yet when a new want arises he must either invent a new vehicle of meaning or wrest an old one to a different purpose ; and this necessity frequently recurring must tend to lessen his idea of the sanctity of symbols. Meanwhile the dog is clear in his own conscience, and draws, with a human nicety, the distinction between formal and essential truth. Of his punning perversions, his legitimate dexterity with symbols, he is even vain ; but when he has told and been detected in a lie, there is not a hair upon his body but confesses guilt. To a dog of gentlemanly feeling theft and falsehood are disgraceful vices. The canine, like the human, gentleman demands in his

misdemeanours Montaigne's "*je ne sais quoi de généreux*." He is never more than half ashamed of having barked or bitten; and for those faults into which he has been led by the desire to shine before a lady of his race, he retains, even under physical correction, a share of pride. But to be caught lying, if he understands it, instantly uncurls his fleece.

Just as among dull observers he preserves a name for truth, the dog has been credited with modesty. It is amazing how the use of language blunts the faculties of man—that because vainglory finds no vent in words, creatures supplied with eyes have been unable to detect a fault so gross and obvious. If a small spoiled dog were suddenly to be endowed with speech, he would prate interminably, and still about himself; when we had friends, we should be forced to lock him in a garret; and what with his whining jealousies and his foible for falsehood, in a year's time he would have gone far to weary out our love. I was about to compare him

to Sir Willoughby Patterne, but the Patternes have a manlier sense of their own merits ; and the parallel, besides, is ready. Hans Christian Andersen, as we behold him in his startling memoirs, thrilling from top to toe with an excruciating vanity, and scouting even along the street for shadows of offence—here was the talking dog.

It is just this rage for consideration that has betrayed the dog into his satellite position as the friend of man. The cat, an animal of franker appetites, preserves his independence. But the dog, with one eye ever on the audience, has been wheedled into slavery, and praised and patted into the renunciation of his nature. Once he ceased hunting and became man's plate-licker, the Rubicon was crossed. Thenceforth he was a gentleman of leisure ; and except the few whom we keep working, the whole race grew more and more self-conscious, mannered and affected. The number of things that a small dog does naturally is strangely small. Enjoying better spirits and not crushed under

material cares, he is far more theatrical than average man. His whole life, if he be a dog of any pretension to gallantry, is spent in a vain show, and in the hot pursuit of admiration. Take out your puppy for a walk, and you will find the little ball of fur clumsy, stupid, bewildered, but natural. Let but a few months pass, and when you repeat the process you will find nature buried in convention. He will do nothing plainly; but the simplest processes of our material life will all be bent into the forms of an elaborate and mysterious etiquette. Instinct, says the fool, has awakened. But it is not so. Some dogs—some, at the very least—if they be kept separate from others, remain quite natural; and these, when at length they meet with a companion of experience, and have the game explained to them, distinguish themselves by the severity of their devotion to its rules. I wish I were allowed to tell a story which would radiantly illuminate the point; but men, like dogs, have an elaborate and mysterious etiquette. It is their bond

of sympathy that both are the children of convention.

The person, man or dog, who has a conscience is eternally condemned to some degree of humbug ; the sense of the law in their members fatally precipitates either towards a frozen and affected bearing. And the converse is true ; and in the elaborate and conscious manners of the dog, moral opinions and the love of the ideal stand confessed. To follow for ten minutes in the street some swaggering, canine cavalier, is to receive a lesson in dramatic art and the cultured conduct of the body ; in every act and gesture you see him true to a refined conception ; and the dullest cur, beholding him, pricks up his ear and proceeds to imitate and parody that charming ease. For to be a high-mannered and high-minded gentleman, careless, affable, and gay, is the inborn pretension of the dog. The large dog, so much lazier, so much more weighed upon with matter, so majestic in repose, so beautiful in effort, is born with the dramatic means

to wholly represent the part. And it is more pathetic and perhaps more instructive to consider the small dog in his conscientious and imperfect efforts to outdo Sir Philip Sidney. For the ideal of the dog is feudal and religious; the ever-present polytheism, the whip-bearing Olympus of mankind, rules them on the one hand; on the other, their singular difference of size and strength among themselves effectually prevents the appearance of the democratic notion. Or we might more exactly compare their society to the curious spectacle presented by a school—ushers, monitors, and big and little boys—qualified by one circumstance, the introduction of the other sex. In each, we should observe a somewhat similar tension of manner, and somewhat similar points of honour. In each the larger animal keeps a contemptuous good humour; in each the smaller annoys him with wasp-like impudence, certain of practical immunity; in each we shall find a double life producing double characters, and an excursive and noisy heroism

combined with a fair amount of practical timidity. I have known dogs, and I have known school heroes that, set aside the fur, could hardly have been told apart; and if we desire to understand the chivalry of old, we must turn to the school playfields or the dungheap where the dogs are trooping.

Woman, with the dog, has been long enfranchised. Incessant massacre of female innocents has changed the proportions of the sexes and perverted their relations. Thus, when we regard the manners of the dog, we see a romantic and monogamous animal, once perhaps as delicate as the cat, at war with impossible conditions. Man has much to answer for; and the part he plays is yet more damnable and parlous than Corin's in the eyes of Touchstone. But his intervention has at least created an imperial situation for the rare surviving ladies. In that society they reign without a rival: conscious queens; and in the only instance of a canine wife-beater that has ever fallen under my notice, the criminal was somewhat excused by the

circumstances of his story. He is a little, very alert, well-bred, intelligent Skye, as black as a hat, with a wet bramble for a nose and two cairngorms for eyes. To the human observer, he is decidedly well-looking ; but to the ladies of his race he seems abhorrent. A thorough elaborate gentleman, of the plume and sword-knot order, he was born with a nice sense of gallantry to women. He took at their hands the most outrageous treatment ; I have heard him bleating like a sheep, I have seen him streaming blood, and his ear tattered like a regimental banner ; and yet he would scorn to make reprisals. Nay more, when a human lady upraised the contumelious whip against the very dame who had been so cruelly misusing him, my little great-heart gave but one hoarse cry and fell upon the tyrant tooth and nail. This is the tale of a soul's tragedy. After three years of unavailing chivalry, he suddenly, in one hour, threw off the yoke of obligation ; had he been Shakespeare he would then have written *Troilus and Cressida* to brand the



offending sex ; but being only a little dog, he began to bite them. The surprise of the ladies whom he attacked indicated the monstrosity of his offence ; but he had fairly beaten off his better angel, fairly committed moral suicide ; for almost in the same hour, throwing aside the last rags of decency, he proceeded to attack the aged also. The fact is worth remark, showing, as it does, that ethical laws are common both to dogs and men ; and that with both a single deliberate violation of the conscience loosens all. "But while the lamp holds on to burn," says the paraphrase, "the greatest sinner may return." I have been cheered to see symptoms of effectual penitence in my sweet ruffian ; and by the handling that he accepted uncomplainingly the other day from an indignant fair one, I begin to hope the period of *Sturm und Drang* is closed.

All these little gentlemen are subtle casuists. The duty to the female dog is plain ; but where competing duties rise, down they will sit and study them out, like Jesuit confessors.

I knew another little Skye, somewhat plain in manner and appearance, but a creature compact of amiability and solid wisdom. His family going abroad for a winter, he was received for that period by an uncle in the same city. The winter over, his own family home again, and his own house (of which he was very proud) reopened, he found himself in a dilemma between two conflicting duties of loyalty and gratitude. His old friends were not to be neglected, but it seemed hardly decent to desert the new. This was how he solved the problem. Every morning, as soon as the door was opened, off posted Coolin to his uncle's, visited the children in the nursery, saluted the whole family, and was back at home in time for breakfast and his bit of fish. Nor was this done without a sacrifice on his part, sharply felt ; for he had to forego the particular honour and jewel of his day—his morning's walk with my father. And, perhaps from this cause, he gradually wearied of and relaxed the practice, and at length returned entirely to his ancient habits.

But the same decision served him in another and more distressing case of divided duty, which happened not long after. He was not at all a kitchen dog, but the cook had nursed him with unusual kindness during the distemper; and though he did not adore her as he adored my father—although (born snob) he was critically conscious of her position as “only a servant”—he still cherished for her a special gratitude. Well, the cook left, and retired some streets away to lodgings of her own; and there was Coolin in precisely the same situation with any young gentleman who has had the inestimable benefit of a faithful nurse. The canine conscience did not solve the problem with a pound of tea at Christmas. No longer content to pay a flying visit, it was the whole forenoon that he dedicated to his solitary friend. And so, day by day, he continued to comfort her solitude until (for some reason which I could never understand and cannot approve) he was kept locked up to break him of the graceful habit. Here, it is not the similarity,

it is the difference, that is worthy of remark ; the clearly marked degrees of gratitude and the proportional duration of his visits. Anything further removed from instinct it were hard to fancy ; and one is even stirred to a certain impatience with a character so destitute of spontaneity, so passionless in justice, and so priggishly obedient to the voice of reason.

There are not many dogs like this good Coolin, and not many people. But the type is one well marked, both in the human and the canine family. Gallantry was not his aim, but a solid and somewhat oppressive respectability. He was a sworn foe to the unusual and the conspicuous, a praiser of the golden mean, a kind of city uncle modified by Cheeryble. And as he was precise and conscientious in all the steps of his own blameless course, he looked for the same precision and an even greater gravity in the bearing of his deity, my father. It was no sinecure to be Coolin's idol : he was exacting like a rigid parent ; and at every sign of

levity in the man whom he respected, he announced loudly the death of virtue and the proximate fall of the pillars of the earth.

I have called him a snob ; but all dogs are so, though in varying degrees. It is hard to follow their snobbery among themselves ; for though I think we can perceive distinctions of rank, we cannot grasp what is the criterion. Thus in Edinburgh, in a good part of the town, there were several distinct societies or clubs that met in the morning to—the phrase is technical—to “rake the buckets” in a troop. A friend of mine, the master of three dogs, was one day surprised to observe that they had left one club and joined another ; but whether it was a rise or a fall, and the result of an invitation or an expulsion, was more than he could guess. And this illustrates pointedly our ignorance of the real life of dogs, their social ambitions and their social hierarchies. At least, in their dealings with men they are not only conscious of sex, but of the difference of

station. And that in the most snobbish manner; for the poor man's dog is not offended by the notice of the rich, and keeps all his ugly feeling for those poorer or more ragged than his master. And again, for every station they have an ideal of behaviour, to which the master, under pain of derogation, will do wisely to conform. How often has not a cold glance of an eye informed me that my dog was disappointed; and how much more gladly would he not have taken a beating than to be thus wounded in the seat of piety!

I knew one disrespectful dog. He was far liker a cat; cared little or nothing for men, with whom he merely coexisted as we do with cattle, and was entirely devoted to the art of poaching. A house would not hold him, and to live in a town was what he refused. He led, I believe, a life of troubled but genuine pleasure, and perished beyond all question in a trap. But this was an exception, a marked reversion to the ancestral type; like the hairy human infant. The

true dog of the nineteenth century, to judge by the remainder of my fairly large acquaintance, is in love with respectability. A street-dog was once adopted by a lady. While still an Arab, he had done as Arabs do, gambolling in the mud, charging into butchers' stalls, a cat-hunter, a sturdy beggar, a common rogue and vagabond ; but with his rise into society he laid aside these inconsistent pleasures. He stole no more, he hunted no more cats ; and conscious of his collar, he ignored his old companions. Yet the canine upper class was never brought to recognise the upstart, and from that hour, except for human countenance, he was alone. Friendless, shorn of his sports and the habits of a lifetime, he still lived in a glory of happiness, content with his acquired respectability, and with no care but to support it solemnly. Are we to condemn or praise this self-made dog ? We praise his human brother. And thus to conquer vicious habits is as rare with dogs as with men. With the more part, for all their scruple-mongering

and moral thought, the vices that are born with them remain invincible throughout; and they live all their years, glorying in their virtues, but still the slaves of their defects. Thus the sage Coolin was a thief to the last; among a thousand peccadilloes, a whole goose and a whole cold leg of mutton lay upon his conscience; but Woggs,<sup>1</sup> whose soul's shipwreck in the matter of gallantry I have recounted above, has only twice been known to steal, and has often nobly conquered the temptation. The eighth is his favourite commandment. There is something painfully human in these unequal virtues and mortal frailties of the best. Still more painful is the bearing of those "stammering professors" in the house of sickness and under the terror of death. It is beyond a doubt to me that, somehow or other, the dog connects together, or confounds, the uneasi-

<sup>1</sup> Walter, Watty, Woggy, Woggs, Wogg, and lastly Bogue; under which last name he fell in battle some twelve months ago. Glory was his aim and he attained it; for his icon, by the hand of Caldecott, now lies among the treasures of the nation.



ness of sickness and the consciousness of guilt. To the pains of the body he often adds the tortures of the conscience; and at these times his haggard protestations form, in regard to the human deathbed, a dreadful parody or parallel.

I once supposed that I had found an inverse relation between the double etiquette which dogs obey; and that those who were most addicted to the showy street life among other dogs were less careful in the practice of home virtues for the tyrant man. But the female dog, that mass of carneying affectations, shines equally in either sphere; rules her rough posse of attendant swains with unwearying tact and gusto; and with her master and mistress pushes the arts of insinuation to their crowning point. The attention of man and the regard of other dogs flatter (it would thus appear) the same sensibility; but perhaps, if we could read the canine heart, they would be found to flatter it in very different degrees. Dogs live with man as courtiers round a monarch, steeped in

the flattery of his notice and enriched with sinecures. To push their favour in this world of pickings and caresses is, perhaps, the business of their lives; and their joys may lie outside. I am in despair at our persistent ignorance. I read in the lives of our companions the same processes of reason, the same antique and fatal conflicts of the right against the wrong, and of unbitted nature with too rigid custom; I see them with our weaknesses, vain, false, inconstant against appetite, and with our one stalk of virtue, devoted to the dream of an ideal; and yet, as they hurry by me on the street with tail in air, or come singly to solicit my regard, I must own the secret purport of their lives is still inscrutable to man. Is man the friend, or is he the patron only? Have they indeed forgotten nature's voice? or are those moments snatched from courtiership when they touch noses with the tinker's mongrel, the brief reward and pleasure of their artificial lives? Doubtless, when man shares with his dog the toils of a profession

and the pleasures of an art, as with the shepherd or the poacher, the affection warms and strengthens till it fills the soul. But doubtless, also, the masters are, in many cases, the object of a merely interested cultus, sitting aloft like Louis Quatorze, giving and receiving flattery and favour; and the dogs, like the majority of men, have but foregone their true existence and become the dupes of their ambition.



### XIII

## "A PENNY PLAIN AND TWOPENCE COLOURED"

THESE words will be familiar to all students of Skelt's Juvenile Drama. That national monument, after having changed its name to Park's, to Webb's, to Redington's, and last of all to Pollock's, has now become, for the most part, a memory. Some of its pillars, like Stonehenge, are still afoot, the rest clean vanished. It may be the Museum numbers a full set; and Mr. Ionides perhaps, or else her gracious Majesty, may boast their great collections; but to the plain private person they are become, like Raphaels, unattainable. I have, at different times, possessed *Aladdin*, *The Red*

*Rover, The Blind Boy, The Old Oak Chest, The Wood Dæmon, Jack Sheppard, The Miller and his Men, Der Freischütz, The Smuggler, The Forest of Bondy, Robin Hood, The Waterman, Richard I., My Poll and my Partner Joe, The Inchcape Bell* (imperfect), and *Three - Fingered Jack, the Terror of Jamaica*; and I have assisted others in the illumination of *The Maid of the Inn* and *The Battle of Waterloo*. In this roll-call of stirring names you read the evidences of a happy childhood; and though not half of them are still to be procured of any living stationer, in the mind of their once happy owner all survive, kaleidoscopes of changing pictures, echoes of the past.

There stands, I fancy, to this day (but now how fallen!) a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood with the sea. When, upon any Saturday, we made a party to behold the ships, we passed that corner; and since in those days I loved a ship as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak, this of

itself had been enough to hallow it. But there was more than that. In the Leith Walk window, all the year round, there stood displayed a theatre in working order, with a "forest set," a "combat," and a few "robbers carousing" in the slides; and below and about, dearer tenfold to me! the plays themselves, those budgets of romance, lay tumbled one upon another. Long and often have I lingered there with empty pockets. One figure, we shall say, was visible in the first plate of characters, bearded, pistol in hand, or drawing to his ear the clothyard arrow; I would spell the name: was it Macaire, or Long Tom Coffin, or Grindoff, 2d dress? O, how I would long to see the rest! how—if the name by chance were hidden—I would wonder in what play he figured, and what immortal legend justified his attitude and strange apparel! And then to go within, to announce yourself as an intending purchaser, and, closely watched, be suffered to undo those bundles and breathlessly devour those pages of gesticu-

lating villains, epileptic combats, bosky forests, palaces and war-ships, frowning fortresses and prison vaults—it was a giddy joy. That shop, which was dark and smelt of Bibles, was a loadstone rock for all that bore the name of boy. They could not pass it by, nor, having entered, leave it. It was a place besieged; the shopmen, like the Jews rebuilding Salem, had a double task. They kept us at the stick's end, frowned us down, snatched each play out of our hand ere we were trusted with another; and, incredible as it may sound, used to demand of us upon our entrance, like banditti, if we came with money or with empty hand. Old Mr. Smith himself, worn out with my eternal vacillation, once swept the treasures from before me, with the cry: "I do not believe, child, that you are an intending purchaser at all!" These were the dragons of the garden; but for such joys of paradise we could have faced the Terror of Jamaica himself. Every sheet we fingered was another lightning glance into obscure, delicious

story ; it was like wallowing in the raw stuff of story-books. I know nothing to compare with it save now and then in dreams, when I am privileged to read in certain unwritten stories of adventure, from which I awake to find the world all vanity. The *crux* of Buridan's donkey was as nothing to the uncertainty of the boy as he handled and lingered and doated on these bundles of delight ; there was a physical pleasure in the sight and touch of them which he would jealously prolong ; and when at length the deed was done, the play selected, and the impatient shopman had brushed the rest into the gray portfolio, and the boy was forth again, a little late for dinner, the lamps springing into light in the blue winter's even, and *The Miller*, or *The Rover*, or some kindred drama clutched against his side—on what gay feet he ran, and how he laughed aloud in exultation ! I can hear that laughter still. Out of all the years of my life, I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these, and that was on the night when I



brought back with me the *Arabian Entertainments* in the fat, old, double-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman-grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might!

The purchase and the first half-hour at home, that was the summit. Thenceforth the interest declined by little and little. The fable, as set forth in the play-book, proved to be not worthy of the scenes and characters: what fable would not? Such passages as: "Scene 6. The Hermitage. Night set scene. Place back of scene 1, No. 2, at back of stage and hermitage, Fig. 2, out of set piece, R. H. in a slanting direction"—such passages, I say, though very practical, are hardly to be called good reading. Indeed, as literature, these dramas did not much appeal to me. I forget the very outline of the plots. Of *The Blind Boy*,

beyond the fact that he was a most injured prince and once, I think, abducted, I know nothing. And *The Old Oak Chest*, what was it all about? that proscrip (1st dress), that prodigious number of banditti, that old woman with the broom, and the magnificent kitchen in the third act (was it in the third?)—they are all fallen in a deliquium, swim faintly in my brain, and mix and vanish.

I cannot deny that joy attended the illumination; nor can I quite forgive that child who, wilfully foregoing pleasure, stoops to "twopence coloured." With crimson lake (hark to the sound of it—crimson lake!—the horns of elf-land are not richer on the ear)—with crimson lake and Prussian blue a certain purple is to be compounded which, for cloaks especially, Titian could not equal. The latter colour with gamboge, a hated name although an exquisite pigment, supplied a green of such a savoury greenness that to-day my heart regrets it. Nor can I recall without a tender weakness the very aspect of the water where I dipped my brush. Yes,

there was pleasure in the painting. But when all was painted, it is needless to deny it, all was spoiled. You might, indeed, set up a scene or two to look at ; but to cut the figures out was simply sacrilege ; nor could any child twice court the tedium, the worry, and the long-drawn disenchantment of an actual performance. Two days after the purchase the honey had been sucked. Parents used to complain ; they thought I wearied of my play. It was not so : no more than a person can be said to have wearied of his dinner when he leaves the bones and dishes ; I had got the marrow of it and said grace.

Then was the time to turn to the back of the play-book and to study that enticing double file of names, where poetry, for the true child of Skelt, reigned happy and glorious like her Majesty the Queen. Much as I have travelled in these realms of gold, I have yet seen, upon that map or abstract, names of El Dorados that still haunt the ear of memory, and are still but names. *The Float-*

*ing Beacon*—why was that denied me? or *The Wreck Ashore*? *Sixteen-String Jack*, whom I did not even guess to be a highway-man, troubled me awake and haunted my slumbers; and there is one sequence of three from that enchanted calender that I still at times recall, like a loved verse of poetry: *Lodoiska, Silver Palace, Echo of Westminster Bridge*. Names, bare names, are surely more to children than we poor, grown-up, obliterated fools remember.

The name of Skelt itself has always seemed a part and parcel of the charm of his productions. It may be different with the rose, but the attraction of this paper drama sensibly declined when Webb had crept into the rubric: a poor cuckoo, flaunting in Skelt's nest. And now we have reached Pollock, sounding deeper gulfs. Indeed, this name of Skelt appears so stagey and piratic, that I will adopt it boldly to design these qualities. Skeltery, then, is a quality of much art. It is even to be found, with reverence be it said, among the works of nature. The stagey is

its generic name ; but it is an old, insular, home-bred staginess ; not French, domestically British ; not of to-day, but smacking of O. Smith, Fitzball, and the great age of melodrama : a peculiar fragrance haunting it ; uttering its unimportant message in a tone of voice that has the charm of fresh antiquity. I will not insist upon the art of Skelt's purveyors. These wonderful characters that once so thrilled our soul with their bold attitude, array of deadly engines and incomparable costume, to-day look somewhat pallidly ; the extreme hard favour of the heroine strikes me, I had almost said with pain ; the villain's scowl no longer thrills me like a trumpet ; and the scenes themselves, those once unparalleled landscapes, seem the efforts of a prentice hand. So much of fault we find ; but on the other side the impartial critic rejoices to remark the presence of a great unity of gusto ; of those direct clap-trap appeals, which a man is dead and buriable when he fails to answer ; of the footlight glamour, the ready-made, bare-faced, transpon-

tine picturesque, a thing not one with cold reality, but how much dearer to the mind!

The scenery of Skeltdom—or, shall we say, the kingdom of Transpontus?—had a prevailing character. Whether it set forth Poland as in *The Blind Boy*, or Bohemia with *The Miller and his Men*, or Italy with *The Old Oak Chest*, still it was Transpontus. A botanist could tell it by the plants. The hollyhock was all pervasive, running wild in deserts; the dock was common, and the bending reed; and overshadowing these were poplar, palm, potato tree, and *Quercus Skeltica*—brave growths. The caves were all embowelled in the Surrey-side formation; the soil was all betrod-den by the light pump of T. P. Cooke. Skelt, to be sure, had yet another, an oriental string: he held the gorgeous east in fee; and in the new quarter of Hyères, say, in the garden of the Hotel des Iles d'Or, you may behold these blessed visions realised. But on these I will not dwell; they were an outwork; it was in the occidental scenery that Skelt was all himself.

It had a strong flavour of England ; it was a sort of indigestion of England and drop-scenes, and I am bound to say was charming. How the roads wander, how the castle sits upon the hill, how the sun eradiates from behind the cloud, and how the congregated clouds themselves uproll, as stiff as bolsters ! Here is the cottage interior, the usual first flat, with the cloak upon the nail, the rosaries of onions, the gun and powder-horn and corner-cup-board ; here is the inn (this drama must be nautical, I foresee Captain Luff and Bold Bob Bowsprit) with the red curtain, pipes, spittoons, and eight-day clock ; and there again is that impressive dungeon with the chains, which was so dull to colour. England, the hedgerow elms, the thin brick houses, windmills, glimpses of the navigable Thames —England, when at last I came to visit it, was only Skelt made evident : to cross the border was, for the Scotsman, to come home to Skelt ; there was the inn-sign and there the horse-trough, all foreshadowed in the faithful Skelt. If, at the ripe age of fourteen

years, I bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance—still I was but a puppet in the hand of Skelt; the original of that regretted bludgeon, and surely the antitype of all the bludgeon kind, greatly improved from Cruikshank, had adorned the hand of Jonathan Wild, pl. 1. "This is mastering me," as Whitman cries, upon some lesser provocation. What am I? what are life, art, letters, the world, but what my Skelt has made them? He stamped himself upon my immaturity. The world was plain before I knew him, a poor penny world; but soon it was all coloured with romance. If I go to the theatre to see a good old melodrama, 'tis but Skelt a little faded. If I visit a bold scene in nature, Skelt would have been bolder; there had been certainly a castle on that mountain, and the hollow tree—that set piece—I seem to miss it in the foreground. Indeed, out of this cut-and-dry, dull, swaggering, obtrusive and infantile art, I seem to



have learned the very spirit of my life's enjoyment; met there the shadows of the characters I was to read about and love in a late future; got the romance of *Der Freischütz* long ere I was to hear of Weber or the mighty Formes; acquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances; and took from these rude cuts an enduring and transforming pleasure. Reader—and yourself?

A word of moral: it appears that B. Pollock, late J. Redington, No. 73 Hoxton Street, not only publishes twenty-three of these old stage favourites, but owns the necessary plates and displays a modest readiness to issue other thirty-three. If you love art, folly, or the bright eyes of children, speed to Pollock's, or to Clarke's of Garrick Street. In Pollock's list of publicanda I perceive a pair of my ancient aspirations: *Wreck Ashore* and *Sixteen-String Jack*; and I cherish the belief that when these shall see once more the light of day, B. Pollock will remember

this apologist. But, indeed, I have a dream at times that is not all a dream. I seem to myself to wander in a ghostly street—E. W., I think, the postal district—close below the fool's-cap of St. Paul's, and yet within easy hearing of the echo of the Abbey bridge. There in a dim shop, low in the roof and smelling strong of glue and footlights, I find myself in quaking treaty with great Skelt himself, the aboriginal, all dusty from the tomb. I buy, with what a choking heart—I buy them all, all but the pantomimes ; I pay my mental money, and go forth ; and lo ! the packets are dust.



XIV

A GOSSIP ON A NOVEL  
OF DUMAS'S

THE books that we re-read the oftenest are not always those that we admire the most ; we choose and we revisit them for many and various reasons, as we choose and revisit human friends. One or two of Scott's novels, Shakespeare, Molière, Montaigne, *The Egoist*, and the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, form the inner circle of my intimates. Behind these comes a good troop of dear acquaintances ; *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the front rank, *The Bible in Spain* not far behind. There are besides a certain number that look at me with reproach as I pass them by on my shelves : books that I once thumbed and

studied : houses which were once like home to me, but where I now rarely visit. I am on these sad terms (and blush to confess it) with Wordsworth, Horace, Burns and Hazlitt. Last of all, there is the class of book that has its hour of brilliancy—glows, sings, charms, and then fades again into insignificance until the fit return. Chief of those who thus smile and frown on me by turns, I must name Virgil and Herrick, who, were they but

“ Their sometime selves the same throughout the year,”

must have stood in the first company with the six names of my continual literary intimates. To these six, incongruous as they seem, I have long been faithful, and hope to be faithful to the day of death. I have never read the whole of Montaigne, but I do not like to be long without reading some of him, and my delight in what I do read never lessens. Of Shakespeare I have read all but *Richard III.*, *Henry VI.*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*;

and these, having already made all suitable endeavour, I now know that I shall never read—to make up for which unfaithfulness I could read much of the rest for ever. Of Molière—surely the next greatest name of Christendom—I could tell a very similar story ; but in a little corner of a little essay these princes are too much out of place, and I prefer to pay my fealty and pass on. How often I have read *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, or *Redgauntlet*, I have no means of guessing, having begun young. But it is either four or five times that I have read *The Egoist*, and either five or six that I have read the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*.

Some, who would accept the others, may wonder that I should have spent so much of this brief life of ours over a work so little famous as the last. And, indeed, I am surprised myself ; not at my own devotion, but the coldness of the world. My acquaintance with the *Vicomte* began, somewhat indirectly, in the year of grace 1863, when I had the advantage of studying certain illustrated

dessert plates in a hotel at Nice. The name of d'Artagnan in the legends I already saluted like an old friend, for I had met it the year before in a work of Miss Yonge's. My first perusal was in one of those pirated editions that swarmed at that time out of Brussels, and ran to such a troop of neat and dwarfish volumes. I understood but little of the merits of the book ; my strongest memory is of the execution of d'Eyméric and Lyodot—a strange testimony to the dulness of a boy, who could enjoy the rough-and-tumble in the Place de Grève, and forget d'Artagnan's visits to the two financiers. My next reading was in winter-time, when I lived alone upon the Pentlands. I would return in the early night from one of my patrols with the shepherd ; a friendly face would meet me in the door, a friendly retriever scurry upstairs to fetch my slippers ; and I would sit down with the *Vicomte* for a long, silent, solitary lamp-light evening by the fire. And yet I know not why I call it silent, when it was enlivened with such a clatter of horse-shoes,

and such a rattle of musketry, and such a stir of talk ; or why I call those evenings solitary in which I gained so many friends. I would rise from my book and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the glittering hollies chequer a Scotch garden, and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills. Thence I would turn again to that crowded and sunny field of life in which it was so easy to forget myself, my cares, and my surroundings : a place busy as a city, bright as a theatre, thronged with memorable faces, and sounding with delightful speech. I carried the thread of that epic into my slumbers, I woke with it unbroken, I rejoiced to plunge into the book again at breakfast, it was with a pang that I must lay it down and turn to my own labours ; for no part of the world has ever seemed to me so charming as these pages, and not even my friends are quite so real, perhaps quite so dear, as d'Artagnan.

Since then I have been going to and fro at very brief intervals in my favourite book ; and I have now just risen from my last (let me

call it my fifth) perusal, having liked it better and admired it more seriously than ever. Perhaps I have a sense of ownership, being so well known in these six volumes. Perhaps I think that d'Artagnan delights to have me read of him, and Louis Quatorze is gratified, and Fouquet throws me a look, and Aramis, although he knows I do not love him, yet plays to me with his best graces, as to an old patron of the show. Perhaps, if I am not careful, something may befall me like what befell George IV. about the battle of Waterloo, and I may come to fancy the *Vicomte* one of the first, and Heaven knows the best, of my own works. At least, I avow myself a partisan ; and when I compare the popularity of the *Vicomte* with that of *Monte Cristo*, or its own elder brother, the *Trois Mousquetaires*, I confess I am both pained and puzzled.

To those who have already made acquaintance with the titular hero in the pages of *Vingt Ans Après*, perhaps the name may act as a deterrent. A man might well stand



back if he supposed he were to follow, for six volumes, so well-conducted, so fine-spoken, and withal so dreary a cavalier as Bragelonne. But the fear is idle. I may be said to have passed the best years of my life in these six volumes, and my acquaintance with Raoul has never gone beyond a bow; and when he, who has so long pretended to be alive, is at last suffered to pretend to be dead, I am sometimes reminded of a saying in an earlier volume: "*Enfin, dit Miss Stewart,*"—and it was of Bragelonne she spoke—" *enfin il a fait quelque chose : c'est, ma foi ! bien heureux.*" I am reminded of it, as I say; and the next moment, when Athos dies of his death, and my dear d'Artagnan bursts into his storm of sobbing, I can but deplore my flippancy.

Or perhaps it is La Vallière that the reader of *Vingt Ans Après* is inclined to flee. Well, he is right there too, though not so right. Louise is no success. Her creator has spared no pains; she is well-meant, not ill-designed, sometimes has a word that rings out true; sometimes, if only for a breath, she may even

engage our sympathies. But I have never envied the King his triumph. And so far from pitying Bragelonne for his defeat, I could wish him no worse (not for lack of malice, but imagination) than to be wedded to that lady. Madame enchants me ; I can forgive that royal minx her most serious offences ; I can thrill and soften with the King on that memorable occasion when he goes to upbraid and remains to flirt ; and when it comes to the "*Allons, aimez-moi donc,*" it is my heart that melts in the bosom of de Guiche. Not so with Louise. Readers cannot fail to have remarked that what an author tells us of the beauty or the charm of his creatures goes for nought ; that we know instantly better ; that the heroine cannot open her mouth but what, all in a moment, the fine phrases of preparation fall from round her like the robes from Cinderella, and she stands before us, self-betrayed, as a poor, ugly, sickly wench, or perhaps a strapping market-woman. Authors, at least, know it well ; a heroine will too often start the trick

of "getting ugly ;" and no disease is more difficult to cure. I said authors ; but indeed I had a side eye to one author in particular, with whose works I am very well acquainted, though I cannot read them, and who has spent many vigils in this cause, sitting beside his ailing puppets and (like a magician) wearying his art to restore them to youth and beauty. There are others who ride too high for these misfortunes. Who doubts the loveliness of Rosalind ? Arden itself was not more lovely. Who ever questioned the perennial charm of Rose Jocelyn, Lucy Desborough, or Clara Middleton ? fair women with fair names, the daughters of George Meredith. Elizabeth Bennet has but to speak, and I am at her knees. Ah ! these are the creators of desirable women. They would never have fallen in the mud with Dumas and poor La Vallière. It is my only consolation that not one of all of them, except the first, could have plucked at the moustache of d'Artagnan.

Or perhaps, again, a proportion of readers stumble at the threshold. In so vast a

mansion there were sure to be back stairs and kitchen offices where no one would delight to linger; but it was at least unhappy that the vestibule should be so badly lighted; and until, in the seventeenth chapter, d'Artagnan sets off to seek his friends, I must confess, the book goes heavily enough. But, from thenceforward, what a feast is spread! Monk kidnapped; d'Artagnan enriched; Mazarin's death; the ever delectable adventure of Belle Isle, wherein Aramis outwits d'Artagnan, with its epilogue (vol. v. chap. xxviii.), where d'Artagnan regains the moral superiority; the love adventures at Fontainebleau, with St. Aignan's story of the dryad and the business of de Guiche, de Wardes, and Manicamp; Aramis made general of the Jesuits; Aramis at the bastille; the night talk in the forest of Sénart; Belle Isle again, with the death of Porthos; and last, but not least, the taming of d'Artagnan the untamable, under the lash of the young King. What other novel has such epic variety and nobility of incident? often, if you

will, impossible ; often of the order of an Arabian story ; and yet all based in human nature. For if you come to that, what novel has more human nature ? not studied with the microscope, but seen largely, in plain daylight, with the natural eye ? What novel has more good sense, and gaiety, and wit, and unflagging, admirable literary skill ? Good souls, I suppose, must sometimes read it in the blackguard travesty of a translation. But there is no style so untranslatable ; light as a whipped trifle, strong as silk ; wordy like a village tale ; pat like a general's despatch ; with every fault, yet never tedious ; with no merit, yet inimitably right. And, once more, to make an end of commendations, what novel is inspired with a more unstrained or a more wholesome morality ?

Yes ; in spite of Miss Yonge, who introduced me to the name of d'Artagnan only to dissuade me from a nearer knowledge of the man, I have to add morality. There is no quite good book without a good morality ; but the world is wide, and so are morals. Out of

two people who have dipped into Sir Richard Burton's *Thousand and One Nights*, one shall have been offended by the animal details ; another to whom these were harmless, perhaps even pleasing, shall yet have been shocked in his turn by the rascality and cruelty of all the characters. Of two readers, again, one shall have been pained by the morality of a religious memoir, one by that of the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*. And the point is that neither need be wrong. We shall always shock each other both in life and art ; we cannot get the sun into our pictures, nor the abstract right (if there be such a thing) into our books ; enough if, in the one, there glimmer some hint of the great light that blinds us from heaven ; enough, if, in the other, there shine, even upon foul details, a spirit of magnanimity. I would scarce send to the *Vicomte* a reader who was in quest of what we may call puritan morality. The ventripotent mulatto, the great eater, worker, earner and waster, the man of much and witty laughter, the man of the great

heart and alas! of the doubtful honesty, is a figure not yet clearly set before the world; he still awaits a sober and yet genial portrait; but with whatever art that may be touched, and whatever indulgence, it will not be the portrait of a precisian. Dumas was certainly not thinking of himself, but of Planchet, when he put into the mouth of d'Artagnan's old servant this excellent profession: "*Monsieur, j'étais une de ces bonnes pâtes d'hommes que Dieu a fait pour s'animer pendant un certain temps et pour trouver bonnes toutes choses qui accompagnent leur séjour sur la terre.*" He was thinking, as I say, of Planchet, to whom the words are aptly fitted; but they were fitted also to Planchet's creator; and perhaps this struck him as he wrote, for observe what follows: "*D'Artagnan s'assit alors près de la fenêtre, et, cette philosophie de Planchet lui ayant paru solide, il y rêva.*" In a man who finds all things good, you will scarce expect much zeal for negative virtues: the active alone will have a charm for him; abstinence, however wise,

however kind, will always seem to such a judge entirely mean and partly impious. So with Dumas. Chastity is not near his heart; nor yet, to his own sore cost, that virtue of frugality which is the armour of the artist. Now, in the *Vicomte*, he had much to do with the contest of Fouquet and Colbert. Historic justice should be all upon the side of Colbert, of official honesty, and fiscal competence. And Dumas knew it well: three times at least he shows his knowledge; once it is but flashed upon us and received with the laughter of Fouquet himself, in the jesting controversy in the gardens of Saint Mandé; once it is touched on by Aramis in the forest of Sénart; in the end, it is set before us clearly in one dignified speech of the triumphant Colbert. But in Fouquet, the waster, the lover of good cheer and wit and art, the swift transactor of much business, "*l'homme de bruit, l'homme de plaisir, l'homme qui n'est que parceque les autres sont,*" Dumas saw something of himself and drew the figure the more tenderly. It is to



me even touching to see how he insists on Fouquet's honour ; not seeing, you might think, that unflawed honour is impossible to spendthrifts ; but rather, perhaps, in the light of his own life, seeing it too well, and clinging the more to what was left. Honour can survive a wound ; it can live and thrive without a member. The man rebounds from his disgrace ; he begins fresh foundations on the ruins of the old ; and when his sword is broken, he will do valiantly with his dagger. So it is with Fouquet in the book ; so it was with Dumas on the battlefield of life.

To cling to what is left of any damaged quality is virtue in the man ; but perhaps to sing its praises is scarcely to be called morality in the writer. And it is elsewhere, it is in the character of d'Artagnan, that we must look for that spirit of morality, which is one of the chief merits of the book, makes one of the main joys of its perusal, and sets it high above more popular rivals. Athos, with the coming of years, has declined too much into the preacher, and

the preacher of a sapless creed ; but d'Artagnan has mellowed into a man so witty, rough, kind and upright, that he takes the heart by storm. There is nothing of the copy-book about his virtues, nothing of the drawing-room in his fine, natural civility ; he will sail near the wind ; he is no district visitor—no Wesley or Robespierre ; his conscience is void of all refinement whether for good or evil ; but the whole man rings true like a good sovereign. Readers who have approached the *Vicomte*, not across country, but by the legitimate, five-volumed avenue of the *Mousquetaires* and *Vingt Ans Après*, will not have forgotten d'Artagnan's ungentlemanly and perfectly improbable trick upon Milady. What a pleasure it is, then, what a reward, and how agreeable a lesson, to see the old captain humble himself to the son of the man whom he had personated ! Here, and throughout, if I am to choose virtues for myself or my friends, let me choose the virtues of d'Artagnan. I do not say there is no

character as well drawn in Shakespeare; I do say there is none that I love so wholly. There are many spiritual eyes that seem to spy upon our actions—eyes of the dead and the absent, whom we imagine to behold us in our most private hours, and whom we fear and scruple to offend: our witnesses and judges. And among these, even if you should think me childish, I must count my d'Artagnan—not d'Artagnan of the memoirs whom Thackeray pretended to prefer—a preference, I take the freedom of saying, in which he stands alone; not the d'Artagnan of flesh and blood, but him of the ink and paper; not Nature's, but Dumas's. And this is the particular crown and triumph of the artist—not to be true merely, but to be lovable; not simply to convince, but to enchant.

There is yet another point in the *Vicomte* which I find incomparable. I can recall no other work of the imagination in which the end of life is represented with so nice a tact. I was asked the other day if

Dumas made me laugh or cry. Well, in this my late fifth reading of the *Vicomte*, I did laugh once at the small Coquelin de Volière business, and was perhaps a thought surprised at having done so: to make up for it, I smiled continually. But for tears, I do not know. If you put a pistol to my throat, I must own the tale trips upon a very airy foot—within a measurable distance of unreality; and for those who like the big guns to be discharged and the great passions to appear authentically, it may even seem inadequate from first to last. Not so to me; I cannot count that a poor dinner, or a poor book, where I meet with those I love; and, above all, in this last volume, I find a singular charm of spirit. It breathes a pleasant and a tonic sadness, always brave, never hysterical. Upon the crowded, noisy life of this long tale, evening gradually falls; and the lights are extinguished, and the heroes pass away one by one. One by one they go, and not a regret embitters their departure; the young succeed them in their places, Louis

Quatorze is swelling larger and shining broader, another generation and another France dawn on the horizon ; but for us and these old men whom we have loved so long, the inevitable end draws near and is welcome. To read this well is to anticipate experience. Ah, if only when these hours of the long shadows fall for us in reality and not in figure, we may hope to face them with a mind as quiet !

But my paper is running out ; the siege guns are firing on the Dutch frontier ; and I must say adieu for the fifth time to my old comrade fallen on the field of glory. *Adieu*—rather *au revoir* ! Yet a sixth time, dearest d'Artagnan, we shall kidnap Monk and take horse together for Belle Isle.

## XV

### A GOSSIP ON ROMANCE

IN anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous ; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence

and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, "towards the close of the year 17—," several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach; he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane; night and the coming of day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw; and the words "post-chaise," the "great North road," "ostler,"

and "nag" still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read story-books in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten, with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of *What will he Do with It*: it was no wonder I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague; it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sickroom. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows



and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck.<sup>1</sup> Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note—they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts—the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more

<sup>1</sup> Since traced by many obliging correspondents to the gallery of Charles Kingsley.

constant. Conduct is three parts of life, they say; but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant harbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another

idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen ; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race ; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder ; certain old houses demand to be haunted ; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and

impenetrable, "miching mallecho." The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the *Antiquary*. But you need not tell me—that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with

incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determine at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into trivial acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations—"here my destiny awaits me"—and we have but dined there and passed on! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip

upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.<sup>1</sup>

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feblest of children uses invention in his play; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader, and to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in *Kidnapped*. Some day, perhaps, I may try a rattle at the shutters.

kind of thing should follow ; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web ; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget ; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful ; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true ; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can

efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature: to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execution, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.



English people of the present day<sup>1</sup> are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on an incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of *Sandy's Mull*, preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melnotte dallying in the deserted banquet-room, are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. Or again look at Thackeray. If Rawdon Crawley's

<sup>1</sup> 1882.

blow were not delivered, *Vanity Fair* would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale ; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of *Esmond* is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields ; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas ; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief ; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of *Robinson Crusoe* with the discredit of *Clarissa Harlowe*. *Clarissa* is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art. It contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity ; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid

and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while *Clarissa* lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of *Robinson* read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance, but he left that farm another man. There were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned

English, and at length, and with entire delight, read *Robinson*. It is like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from *Clarissa*, would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour? I wonder. Yet *Clarissa* has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted—pictorial or picture-making romance. While *Robinson* depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight.

But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age—I mean the *Arabian Nights*—where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of some of his romances. The early part of *Monte Cristo*, down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect storytelling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, un-

natural and dull ; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain ; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into *Monte Cristo*. Here are stories which powerfully affect the reader, which can be reperused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them ; their springs are an open secret ; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran ; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feveril is pure drama ; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance ; it has nothing to do

with character ; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order : in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice ; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves ; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius—I do not say it does ; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal ; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. *Robinson Crusoe* is as realistic as it is romantic ; both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend

upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa is a very trifling incident ; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It was the scene of Crusoe at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is "a joy for ever" to the man who reads of them. They are the things that should be found, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, *The Sailor's Sweetheart*, by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig *Morning Star* is very rightly felt and spiritedly written ; but the clothes, the books and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat.



We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the *Swiss Family Robinson*, that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's *Mysterious Island* is another case in point: there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the *Morning Star* fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of romantic story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering or virtue. But the characters are still themselves, they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugène de Rastignac, for I have scarce a hope or fear

in common with them. It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves ; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realised in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters ; then we push the hero aside ; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience ; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our day-dreams ; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death ; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child ; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life ; and when the game so chimes with his fancy that

he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. *The Lady of the Lake* has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, *The Lady of the Lake*, or that direct, romantic opening—one of the most spirited and poetical in literature—"The stag at eve had drunk his fill." The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the

novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, *The Pirate*, the figure of Cleveland—cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness—moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders—singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress—is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, "Through groves of palm," sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In *Guy Mannering*, again, every incident is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

"'I remember the tune well,' he says, 'though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.' He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations

of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song—

“‘Are these the links of Forth, she said;  
Or are they the crooks of Dee,  
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head  
That I so fain would see?’

“‘By heaven!’ said Bertram, ‘it is the very ballad.’”

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon for omission. Miss Braddon's idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg's appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Derncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie's recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted

by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: "a damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen." A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the "damsel"; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man of the finest creative instinct touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style, and

not only frequently weak, but frequently wrong in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety with a true heroic note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the romantic with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great day-



dreamer, a seer of fit and beautiful and humorous visions, but hardly a great artist; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic—an idle child.

## XVI

### A HUMBLE REMONSTRANCE<sup>1</sup>

#### I

WE have recently<sup>2</sup> enjoyed a quite peculiar pleasure: hearing, in some detail, the opinions, about the art they practise, of Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. Henry James; two men certainly of very different calibre: Mr. James so precise of outline, so cunning of fence, so scrupulous of finish, and Mr. Besant so genial, so friendly, with so persuasive and humorous a vein of whim: Mr. James the very type of the deliberate artist,

<sup>1</sup> This paper, which does not otherwise fit the present volume, is reprinted here as the proper continuation of the last.

<sup>2</sup> 1884.

Mr. Besant the impersonation of good nature. That such doctors should differ will excite no great surprise ; but one point in which they seem to agree fills me, I confess, with wonder. For they are both content to talk about the "art of fiction ;" and Mr. Besant, waxing exceedingly bold, goes on to oppose this so-called "art of fiction" to the "art of poetry." By the art of poetry he can mean nothing but the art of verse, an art of handicraft, and only comparable with the art of prose. For that heat and height of sane emotion which we agree to call by the name of poetry, is but a libertine and vagrant quality ; present, at times, in any art, more often absent from them all ; too seldom present in the prose novel, too frequently absent from the ode and epic. Fiction is in the same case ; it is no substantive art, but an element which enters largely into all the arts but architecture. Homer, Wordsworth, Phidias, Hogarth, and Salvini, all deal in fiction ; and yet I do not suppose that either Hogarth or Salvini, to mention but these

two, entered in any degree into the scope of Mr. Besant's interesting lecture or Mr. James's charming essay. The art of fiction, then, regarded as a definition, is both too ample and too scanty. Let me suggest another; let me suggest that what both Mr. James and Mr. Besant had in view was neither more nor less than the art of narrative.

But Mr. Besant is anxious to speak solely of "the modern English novel," the stay and bread-winner of Mr. Mudie; and in the author of the most pleasing novel on that roll, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, the desire is natural enough. I can conceive then, that he would hasten to propose two additions, and read thus: the art of *fictitious* narrative *in prose*.

Now the fact of the existence of the modern English novel is not to be denied; materially, with its three volumes, leaded type, and gilded lettering, it is easily distinguishable from other forms of literature; but to talk at all fruitfully of any branch of

art, it is needful to build our definitions on some more fundamental ground than binding. Why, then, are we to add "in prose?" *The Odyssey* appears to me the best of romances; *The Lady of the Lake* to stand high in the second order; and Chaucer's tales and prologues to contain more of the matter and art of the modern English novel than the whole treasury of Mr. Mudie. Whether a narrative be written in blank verse or the Spenserian stanza, in the long period of Gibbon or the chipped phrase of Charles Reade, the principles of the art of narrative must be equally observed. The choice of a noble and swelling style in prose affects the problem of narration in the same way, if not to the same degree, as the choice of measured verse; for both imply a closer synthesis of events, a higher key of dialogue, and a more picked and stately strain of words. If you are to refuse *Don Juan*, it is hard to see why you should include *Zanoni* or (to bracket works of very different value) *The Scarlet Letter*; and by what discrimination are you to open

your doors to *The Pilgrim's Progress* and close them on *The Faery Queen*? To bring things closer home, I will here propound to Mr. Besant a conundrum. A narrative called *Paradise Lost* was written in English verse by one John Milton; what was it then? It was next translated by Chateaubriand into French prose; and what was it then? Lastly, the French translation was, by some inspired compatriot of George Gilfillan (and of mine) turned bodily into an English novel; and, in the name of clearness, what was it then?

But, once more, why should we add "fictitious"? The reason why is obvious. The reason why not, if something more recondite, does not want for weight. The art of narrative, in fact, is the same, whether it is applied to the selection and illustration of a real series of events or of an imaginary series. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (a work of cunning and inimitable art) owes its success to the same technical manœuvres as (let us say) *Tom Jones*: the clear conception of certain

characters of man, the choice and presentation of certain incidents out of a great number that offered, and the invention (yes, invention) and preservation of a certain key in dialogue. In which these things are done with the more art—in which with the greater air of nature—readers will differently judge. Boswell's is, indeed, a very special case, and almost a generic; but it is not only in Boswell, it is in every biography with any salt of life, it is in every history where events and men, rather than ideas, are presented—in Tacitus, in Carlyle, in Michelet, in Macaulay—that the novelist will find many of his own methods most conspicuously and adroitly handled. He will find besides that he, who is free—who has the right to invent or steal a missing incident, who has the right, more precious still, of wholesale omission—is frequently defeated, and, with all his advantages, leaves a less strong impression of reality and passion. Mr. James utters his mind with a becoming fervour on the sanctity of truth to

the novelist ; on a more careful examination truth will seem a word of very debateable propriety, not only for the labours of the novelist, but for those of the historian. No art—to use the daring phrase of Mr. James—can successfully “compete with life;” and the art that seeks to do so is condemned to perish *montibus aviis*. Life goes before us, infinite in complication ; attended by the most various and surprising meteors ; appealing at once to the eye, to the ear, to the mind—the seat of wonder, to the touch—so thrillingly delicate, and to the belly—so imperious when starved. It combines and employs in its manifestation the method and material, not of one art only, but of all the arts. Music is but an arbitrary trifling with a few of life’s majestic chords ; painting is but a shadow of its pageantry of light and colour ; literature does but drily indicate that wealth of incident, of moral obligation, of virtue, vice, action, rapture and agony, with which it teems. To “compete with life,” whose sun we cannot look



upon, whose passions and diseases waste and slay us—to compete with the flavour of wine, the beauty of the dawn, the scorching of fire, the bitterness of death and separation—here is, indeed, a projected escalade of heaven; here are, indeed, labours for a Hercules in a dress coat, armed with a pen and a dictionary to depict the passions, armed with a tube of superior flake-white to paint the portrait of the insufferable sun. No art is true in this sense: none can “compete with life:” not even history, built indeed of indisputable facts, but these facts robbed of their vivacity and sting; so that even when we read of the sack of a city or the fall of an empire, we are surprised, and justly commend the author’s talent, if our pulse be quickened. And mark, for a last differentia, that this quickening of the pulse is, in almost every case, purely agreeable; that these phantom reproductions of experience, even at their most acute, convey decided pleasure; while experience itself, in the cockpit of life, can torture and slay.

What, then, is the object, what the method, of an art, and what the source of its power? The whole secret is that no art does "compete with life." Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality. The arts, like arithmetic and geometry, turn away their eyes from the gross, coloured and mobile nature at our feet, and regard instead a certain figmentary abstraction. Geometry will tell us of a circle, a thing never seen in nature; asked about a green circle or an iron circle, it lays its hand upon its mouth. So with the arts. Painting, ruefully comparing sunshine and flake-white, gives up truth of colour, as it had already given up relief and movement; and instead of vying with nature, arranges a scheme of harmonious tints. Literature, above all in its most typical mood, the mood of narrative, similarly flees the direct challenge and pursues instead an independent and creative aim. So far as it imitates at all, it imitates not life but speech: not the facts of human destiny, but

the emphasis and the suppressions with which the human actor tells of them. The real art that dealt with life directly was that of the first men who told their stories round the savage camp-fire. Our art is occupied, and bound to be occupied, not so much in making stories true as in making them typical ; not so much in capturing the lineaments of each fact, as in marshalling all of them towards a common end. For the welter of impressions, all forcible but all discreet, which life presents, it substitutes a certain artificial series of impressions, all indeed most feebly represented, but all aiming at the same effect, all eloquent of the same idea, all chiming together like consonant notes in music or like the graduated tints in a good picture. From all its chapters, from all its pages, from all its sentences, the well-written novel echoes and re-echoes its one creative and controlling thought ; to this must every incident and character contribute ; the style must have been pitched in unison with this ; and if there is anywhere

a word that looks another way, the book would be stronger, clearer, and (I had almost said) fuller without it. Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate. Life imposes by brute energy, like inarticulate thunder; art catches the ear, among the far louder noises of experience, like an air artificially made by a discreet musician. A proposition of geometry does not compete with life; and a proposition of geometry is a fair and luminous parallel for a work of art. Both are reasonable, both untrue to the crude fact; both inhere in nature, neither represents it. The novel, which is a work of art, exists, not by its resemblances to life, which are forced and material, as a shoe must still consist of leather, but by its immeasurable difference from life, which is designed and significant, and is both the method and the meaning of the work.

The life of man is not the subject of

novels, but the inexhaustible magazine from which subjects are to be selected ; the name of these is legion ; and with each new subject—for here again I must differ by the whole width of heaven from Mr. James—the true artist will vary his method and change the point of attack. That which was in one case an excellence, will become a defect in another ; what was the making of one book, will in the next be impertinent or dull. First each novel, and then each class of novels, exists by and for itself. I will take, for instance, three main classes, which are fairly distinct : first, the novel of adventure, which appeals to certain almost sensual and quite illogical tendencies in man ; second, the novel of character, which appeals to our intellectual appreciation of man's foibles and mingled and inconstant motives ; and third, the dramatic novel, which deals with the same stuff as the serious theatre, and appeals to our emotional nature and moral judgment.

And first for the novel of adventure. Mr. James refers, with singular generosity of

praise, to a little book about a quest for hidden treasure ; but he lets fall, by the way, some rather startling words. In this book he misses what he calls the "immense luxury" of being able to quarrel with his author. The luxury, to most of us, is to lay by our judgment, to be submerged by the tale as by a billow, and only to awake, and begin to distinguish and find fault, when the piece is over and the volume laid aside. Still more remarkable is Mr. James's reason. He cannot criticise the author, as he goes, "because," says he, comparing it with another work, "*I have been a child, but I have never been on a quest for buried treasure.*" Here is, indeed, a wilful paradox ; for if he has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child. There never was a child (unless Master James) but has hunted gold, and been a pirate, and a military commander, and a bandit of the mountains ; but has fought, and suffered shipwreck and prison, and imbrued its little hands in gore, and gallantly retrieved

the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty. Elsewhere in his essay Mr. James has protested with excellent reason against too narrow a conception of experience; for the born artist, he contends, the "faintest hints of life" are converted into revelations; and it will be found true, I believe, in a majority of cases, that the artist writes with more gusto and effect of those things which he has only wished to do, than of those which he has done. Desire is a wonderful telescope, and Pisgah the best observatory. Now, while it is true that neither Mr. James nor the author of the work in question has ever, in the fleshly sense, gone questing after gold, it is probable that both have ardently desired and fondly imagined the details of such a life in youthful day-dreams; and the author, counting upon that, and well aware (cunning and low-minded man!) that this class of interest, having been frequently treated, finds a readily accessible and beaten road to the sympathies of the reader, addressed himself throughout to the building up and circumstantiation of

this boyish dream. Character to the boy is a sealed book ; for him, a pirate is a beard, a pair of wide trousers and a liberal complement of pistols. The author, for the sake of circumstantiation and because he was himself more or less grown up, admitted character, within certain limits, into his design ; but only within certain limits. Had the same puppets figured in a scheme of another sort, they had been drawn to very different purpose ; for in this elementary novel of adventure, the characters need to be presented with but one class of qualities—the warlike and formidable. So as they appear insidious in deceit and fatal in the combat, they have served their end. Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals ; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles ; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear. To add more traits, to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to



stultify your tale. The stupid reader will only be offended, and the clever reader lose the scent.

The novel of character has this difference from all others : that it requires no coherency of plot, and for this reason, as in the case of *Gil Blas*, it is sometimes called the novel of adventure. It turns on the humours of the persons represented ; these are, to be sure, embodied in incidents, but the incidents themselves, being tributary, need not march in a progression ; and the characters may be statically shown. As they enter, so they may go out ; they must be consistent, but they need not grow. Here Mr. James will recognise the note of much of his own work : he treats, for the most part, the statics of character, studying it at rest or only gently moved ; and, with his usual delicate and just artistic instinct, he avoids those stronger passions which would deform the attitudes he loves to study, and change his sitters from the humorists of ordinary life to the brute forces and bare types of more emotional

moments. In his recent *Author of Beltraffio*, so just in conception, so nimble and neat in workmanship, strong passion is indeed employed ; but observe that it is not displayed. Even in the heroine the working of the passion is suppressed ; and the great struggle, the true tragedy, the *scène-à-faire*, passes unseen behind the panels of a locked door. The delectable invention of the young visitor is introduced, consciously or not, to this end : that Mr. James, true to his method, might avoid the scene of passion. I trust no reader will suppose me guilty of undervaluing this little masterpiece. I mean merely that it belongs to one marked class of novel, and that it would have been very differently conceived and treated had it belonged to that other marked class, of which I now proceed to speak.

I take pleasure in calling the dramatic novel by that name, because it enables me to point out by the way a strange and peculiarly English misconception. It is sometimes supposed that the drama consists

of incident. It consists of passion, which gives the actor his opportunity; and that passion must progressively increase, or the actor, as the piece proceeded, would be unable to carry the audience from a lower to a higher pitch of interest and emotion. A good serious play must therefore be founded on one of the passionate *crucies* of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple; and the same is true of what I call, for that reason, the dramatic novel. I will instance a few worthy specimens, all of our own day and language; Meredith's *Rhoda Fleming*, that wonderful and painful book, long out of print,<sup>1</sup> and hunted for at book-stalls like an Aldine; Hardy's *Pair of Blue Eyes*; and two of Charles Reade's, *Griffith Gaunt* and *The Double Marriage*, originally called *White Lies*, and founded (by an accident quaintly favourable to my nomenclature) on a play by Maquet, the partner of the great Dumas. In this kind of novel the closed door of *The Author of Beltraffio* must

<sup>1</sup> Now no longer so, thank Heaven!

be broken open ; passion must appear upon the scene and utter its last word ; passion is the be-all and the end-all, the plot and the solution, the protagonist and the *deus ex machinâ* in one. The characters may come anyhow upon the stage : we do not care ; the point is, that, before they leave it, they shall become transfigured and raised out of themselves by passion. It may be part of the design to draw them with detail ; to depict a full-length character, and then behold it melt and change in the furnace of emotion. But there is no obligation of the sort ; nice portraiture is not required ; and we are content to accept mere abstract types, so they be strongly and sincerely moved. A novel of this class may be even great, and yet contain no individual figure ; it may be great, because it displays the workings of the perturbed heart and the impersonal utterance of passion ; and with an artist of the second class it is, indeed, even more likely to be great, when the issue has thus been narrowed and the whole force of the writer's mind

directed to passion alone. Cleverness again, which has its fair field in the novel of character, is debarred all entry upon this more solemn theatre. A far-fetched motive, an ingenious evasion of the issue, a witty instead of a passionate turn, offend us like an insincerity. All should be plain, all straightforward to the end. Hence it is that, in *Rhoda Fleming*, Mrs. Lovel raises such resentment in the reader; her motives are too flimsy, her ways are too equivocal, for the weight and strength of her surroundings. Hence the hot indignation of the reader when Balzac, after having begun the *Duchesse de Langeais* in terms of strong if somewhat swollen passion, cuts the knot by the derangement of the hero's clock. Such personages and incidents belong to the novel of character; they are out of place in the high society of the passions; when the passions are introduced in art at their full height, we look to see them, not baffled and impotently striving, as in life, but towering above circumstance and acting substitutes for fate.

And here I can imagine Mr. James, with his lucid sense, to intervene. To much of what I have said he would apparently demur; in much he would, somewhat impatiently, acquiesce. It may be true; but it is not what he desired to say or to hear said. He spoke of the finished picture and its worth when done; I, of the brushes, the palette, and the north light. He uttered his views in the tone and for the ear of good society; I, with the emphasis and technicalities of the obtrusive student. But the point, I may reply, is not merely to amuse the public, but to offer helpful advice to the young writer. And the young writer will not so much be helped by genial pictures of what an art may aspire to at its highest, as by a true idea of what it must be on the lowest terms. The best that we can say to him is this: Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive, and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity

or contrast; avoid a sub-plot, unless, as sometimes in Shakespeare, the sub-plot be a reversion or complement of the main intrigue; suffer not his style to flag below the level of the argument; pitch the key of conversation, not with any thought of how men talk in parlours, but with a single eye to the degree of passion he may be called on to express; and allow neither himself in the narrative nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story or the discussion of the problem involved. Let him not regret if this shortens his book; it will be better so; for to add irrelevant matter is not to lengthen but to bury. Let him not mind if he miss a thousand qualities, so that he keeps unflaggingly in pursuit of the one he has chosen. Let him not care particularly if he miss the tone of conversation, the pungent material detail of the day's manners, the reproduction of the atmosphere and the environment. These elements are not essential: a novel may be excellent, and

yet have none of them ; a passion or a character is so much the better depicted as it rises clearer from material circumstance. In this age of the particular, let him remember the ages of the abstract, the great books of the past, the brave men that lived before Shakespeare and before Balzac. And as the root of the whole matter, let him bear in mind that his novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude ; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity. For although, in great men, working upon great motives, what we observe and admire is often their complexity, yet underneath appearances the truth remains unchanged : that simplification was their method, and that simplicity is their excellence.

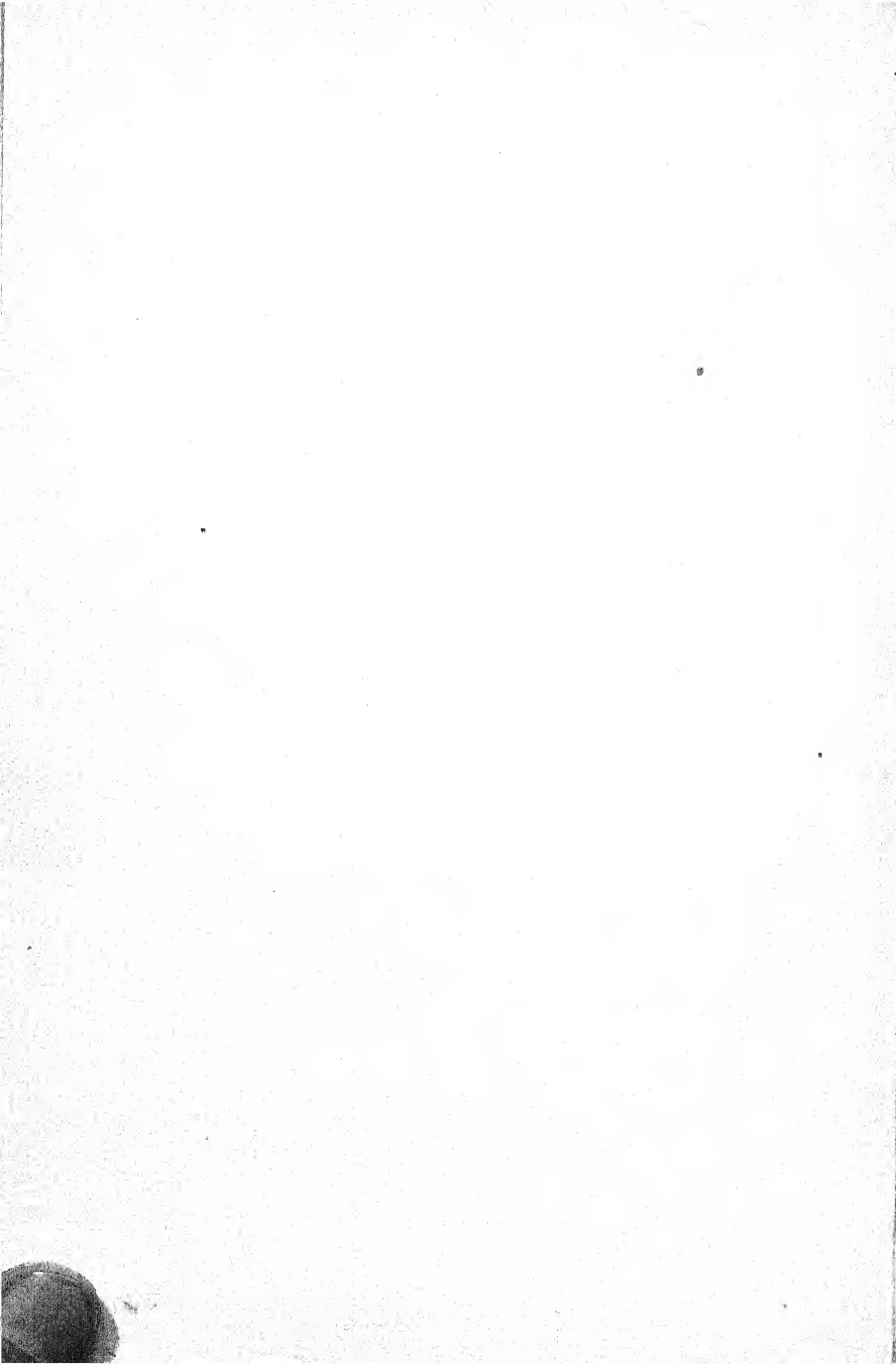
## II

Since the above was written another novelist has entered repeatedly the lists of theory: one well worthy of mention, Mr



W. D. Howells; and none ever couched a lance with narrower convictions. His own work and those of his pupils and masters singly occupy his mind; he is the bonds slave, the zealot of his school; he dreams of an advance in art like what there is in science; he thinks of past things as radically dead; he thinks a form can be outlived: a strange immersion in his own history; a strange forgetfulness of the history of the race! Meanwhile, by a glance at his own works (could he see them with the eager eyes of his readers) much of this illusion would be dispelled. For while he holds all the poor little orthodoxies of the day—no poorer and no smaller than those of yesterday or to-morrow, poor and small, indeed, only so far as they are exclusive—the living quality of much that he has done is of a contrary, I had almost said of a heretical, complexion. A man, as I read him, of an originally strong romantic bent—a certain glow of romance still resides in many of his books, and lends them their distinction. As by accident he runs out and revels in the

exceptional; and it is then, as often as not, that his reader rejoices—justly, as I contend. For in all this excessive eagerness to be centrally human, is there not one central human thing that Mr. Howells is too often tempted to neglect: I mean himself? A poet, a finished artist, a man in love with the appearances of life, a cunning reader of the mind, he has other passions and aspirations than those he loves to draw. And why should he suppress himself and do such reverence to the Lemuel Barkers? The obvious is not of necessity the normal; fashion rules and deforms; the majority fall tamely into the contemporary shape, and thus attain, in the eyes of the true observer, only a higher power of insignificance; and the danger is lest, in seeking to draw the normal, a man should draw the null, and write the novel of society instead of the romance of man.



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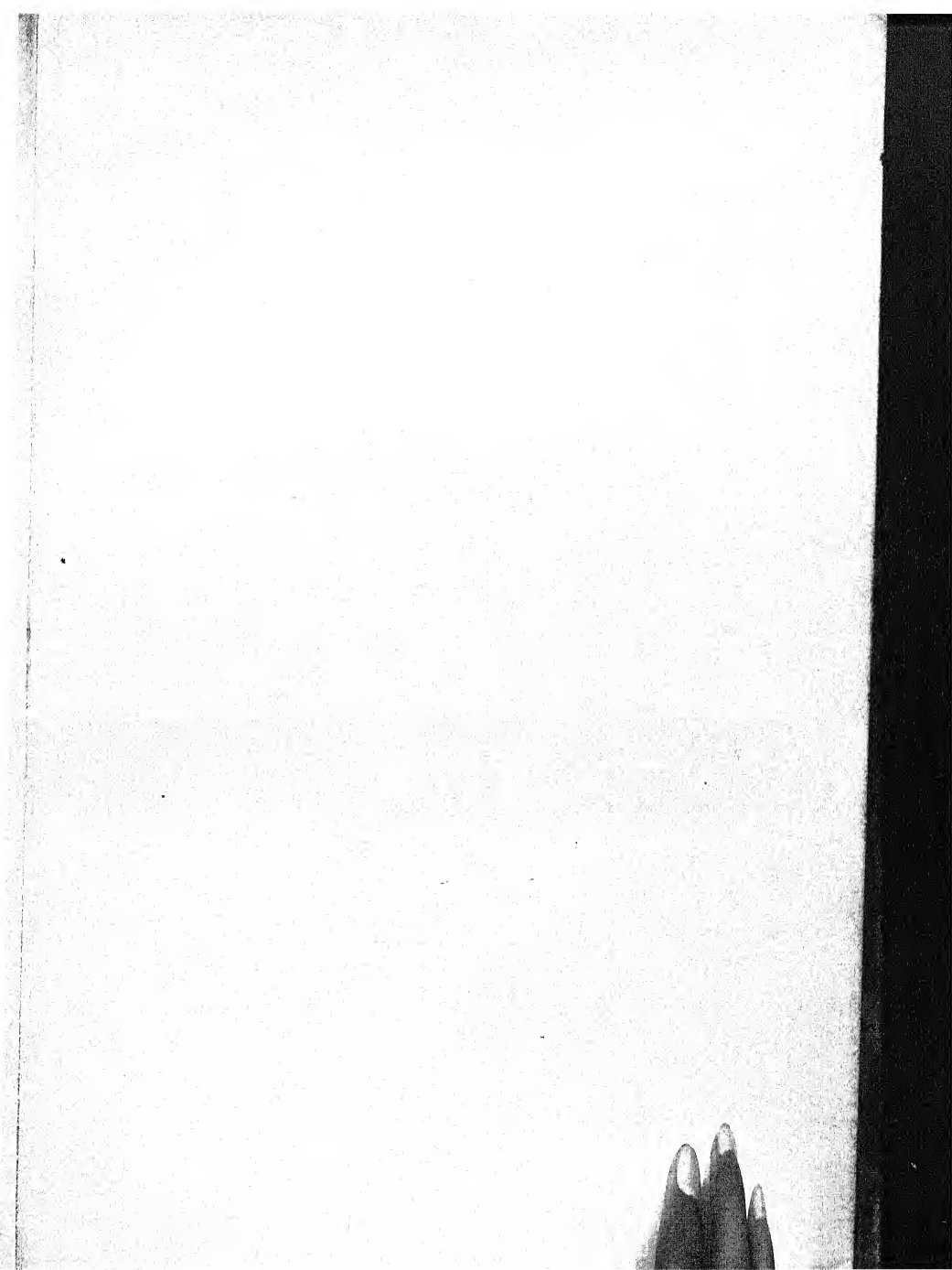
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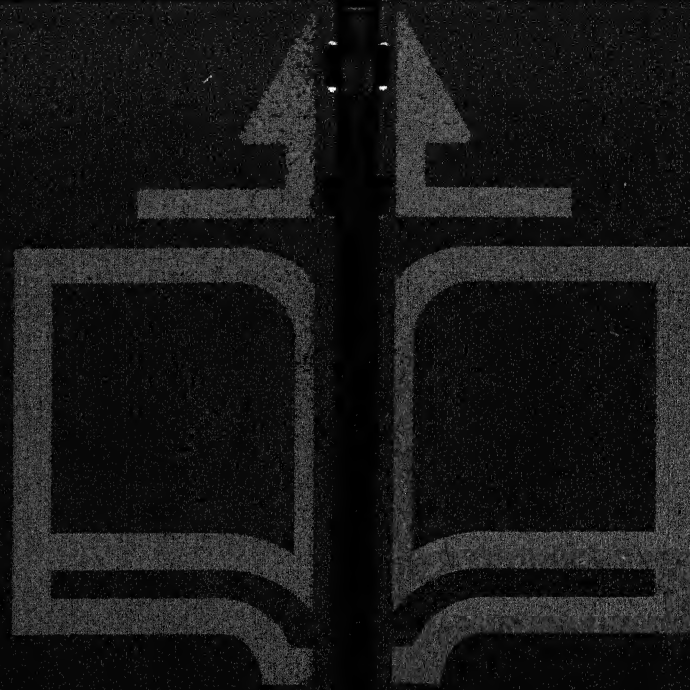
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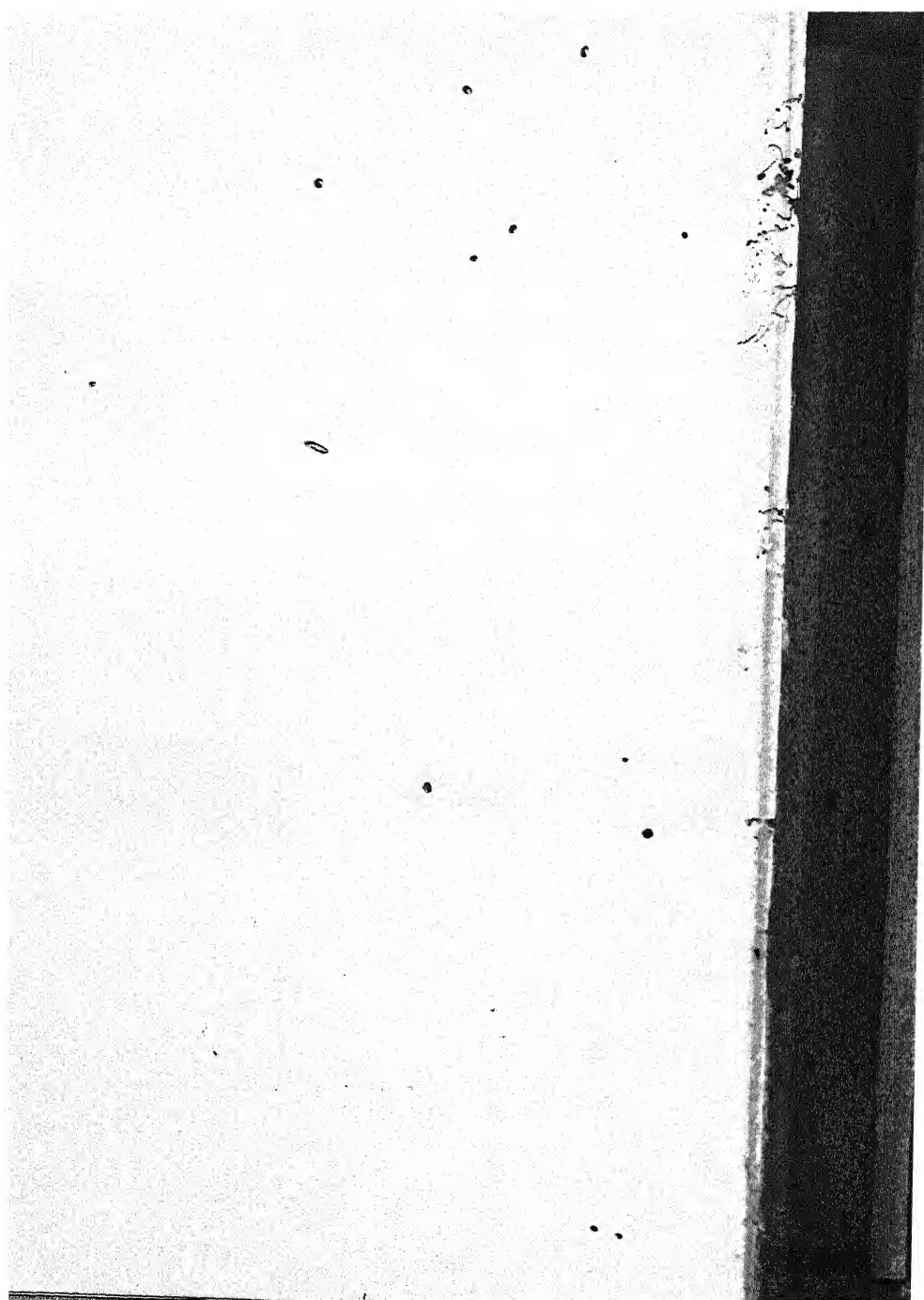
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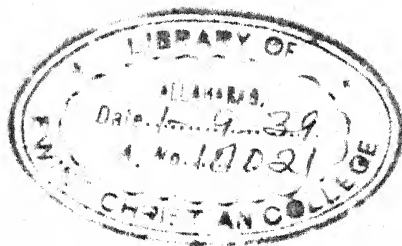




# RELIGIONS AND RELIGION

By

JAMES H. MOULTON, D.D., D.Theol.



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## CHAPTER I

### A CENTURY AND ITS LESSONS

OUR present retrospect takes us over a period of astonishing intellectual activity. For the outburst of new ideas, and the application of new scientific knowledge to the practical uses of life, the nineteenth century is likely to retain the title of 'Wonderful' even when its achievements have been far outstripped by the still unimagined triumphs of days that are yet to be. I need not stay to elaborate a commonplace, or to point out how vast a change in our whole mental outlook has been effected by the new facts and the new theories which have accumulated with such bewildering rapidity. I will only pass in brief review the main lines of the contrast between the conditions of world evangelization now and in the opening years of the last century, that we may gather the points in which our problem differs from that which confronted the founders of foreign missionary enterprise. Most of them are all too obvious. But we must sometimes study the obvious, for we are very prone to let a false shame hold us back from due consideration of what is vital, just because we cannot hope to have anything new to say.

#### I

First will naturally come the transformation of the outward world. It is very significant that in all its

history Christianity has been quick to seize on the new developments of the world around and press them into service for its supreme purpose. In the early days of the Roman Empire the messengers of the new-founded Faith took full advantage of the security of travel by land and sea, the universal currency of the Greek world language, and all those other short-lived blessings which helped to mark that epoch as veritably 'the fullness of the times.' When the invention of printing threw the doors of knowledge open to the world, it was no accident that the Bible was, then as ever since, by far the first of all books in the use of the great discovery. And so in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the French Revolution had taught Europe that the gifts of life can never again be the monopoly of the few, when the terror of a detestable military despotism was nigh unto vanishing away, and Western civilization was ready to begin the great onward march towards freedom and peace, we find the new world outlook expressing itself in the simultaneous foundation of missionary societies in various Churches, and of the Bible Society that federates them all. The subsequent history of this work has shown the Church always ready to make prompt use of the inventions which have changed the face of the globe. Railways and ocean steamers, cable communication and wireless telegraphy, have made the world a strangely different habitation for us from that in which our ancestors lived. Political conditions have changed everywhere; and nearly every nation, in the old civilization and in the new, finds itself forced to accommodate itself, willingly or unwillingly, to an incipient federation of

mankind, in which whole peoples realize isolation impossible, since under the new conditions 'no man liveth unto himself.' And the Church's great work has in a thousand ways revealed her consciousness that to her by divine ordinance 'the toll of the ages has come as an inheritance.'<sup>1</sup> Her missionaries have rejoiced in the growing speed and facility of travel that can save them so much time upon their gracious errand. Her educators have seized for their purpose the thirst for knowledge that has come with the shrinkage of the world, and have been swift to show how their Faith is closely allied with every advance in intellectual achievement. Her healing ministries have been the first to bring into many a land the marvellous triumphs of medicine and surgery. Her statesmen, with an outlook far wider than that of secular Foreign Secretaries, confined within the particularist cares of the interests of their own single nation, have learnt to think in continents, to lay far-reaching plans for the interests of all the nations, which in their hands prove to be no longer antagonistic but identical.

The time would fail me if I tried to develop with any pretence to fullness the changes in the world's outward conditions which the 'Wonderful Century' has left behind and its successor is continuing with unabated energy. Perhaps I have really named in these few sentences all the novelties which have brought serious moral advance. A large proportion of the conveniences given us by modern invention make little difference to the deeper welfare of humanity. We think them indispensable, but we

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 11, according to a rendering made probable by the language of the papyri.

should be very much the same men and women without them, and the majority of our fellows have to do without them still. But mechanical inventions which have quickened and cheapened travel, and even made travel possible and easy where it was impossible before, have had a moral influence on the solidarity of mankind. Only less revolutionary have been those discoveries of science which have done so much to master the fell power of plague and famine, and thus to make habitable large regions of the world where death held carnival of yore. In all these things we recognize ourselves in a new age, an age undreamt of by our brave forefathers, who, with a splendid faith, set out to conquer unknown continents for the Kingdom of God.

## II

But if outward conditions have vastly changed during this eventful century, assuredly the revolution in the world of thought has been for our object more momentous still. There have been two or three movements of immense range which have during the past century profoundly affected the attitude of open-minded thinking men towards Christianity. That it is possible to-day to write an exposition of our faith which takes account of them all, and fearlessly welcomes their legitimate results, is not the least among the evidences that the religion of Christ is indeed founded on the rock. First in order of time came the movement which we may call by the general name of Criticism. It was based on the growing conviction that the Bible must no

longer be kept within a ring fence, preserved by its unique sanctity from processes of inquiry to which other books are subjected. The 'Lower' criticism must inquire for the Gospels as well as for Homer or Aeschylus whether we have the text approximately as it left their writers' hands, or seriously corrupted in the long process of transmission. The 'Higher' criticism must there take up the quest, and examine as rigorously and scientifically as it must for writings outside Scripture who wrote these books, and when and why and how. Traditions must be sifted and nothing taken for granted: if these books contain the Truth, God will take care of His own. And, finally, 'Historical' criticism must not shrink to come in and ask whether the sacred volume which has had long and unique influence upon the world is exempt from the possibility of errors in history and errors in science. The onward march of this new force has been attended by much misgiving on the part of men who have the best of all reasons for loving and reverencing a divine library that has taught them of a heavenly Father. Such may be forgiven if they have rebelled against a science which seems to them to lay sacrilegious hands on what has proved itself to be infinitely holy. There are 'fearful saints' in plenty who still catch with eagerness at every real or imaginary novelty by which it is thought the dreaded enemy may be driven back. To some of the very serious consequences of this movement for Foreign Missions we must return later. But meanwhile we may bid our brethren 'fresh courage take.' God has provided His own answer, and as we might expect, it is an infinitely better one than

we could devise. It is—the British and Foreign Bible Society! Through a century Criticism has been proving the Bible truly human, written by human hands in human language, and liable in unessentials to human error. Through a century the Bible Society has been proving it divine, by simply letting it speak for itself without note or comment in the languages of the whole earth. And wherever it has spoken, signs and wonders have endorsed its message. The wilderness has blossomed as the rose, the madman sits clothed and in his right mind at the feet of a Saviour present still. While miracles like these continue to attest the uniqueness of our Book, we have small reason to be angry or afraid, whatever science may determine concerning the human features of a message thus manifestly from God.

### III

Halfway through the century we are reviewing there came the momentous epoch of the Darwinian theory. What the ultimate verdict of science may be upon the theory, as set forth by Darwin and Wallace, matters nothing for our purpose. If it were destined to be swept away by new theories that could better explain the facts, none the less would its promulgation mark a great turning-point in human thought. For the coming of Evolution meant a new spirit infused into every department of knowledge. Some application of the general idea of gradual and regular development, under fixed laws, came to be a demand of science in all the subjects she essayed to study. Language,



history, and institutions became objects of the new method, just as much as biology or physics. A revelation of the Reign of Law invaded every field of thought. I need not stay to show how profoundly the changed outlook affected the belief in the miraculous. We ourselves, who continue to regard the Gospels as records of history, can never look on miracle in the naïve fashion of our ancestors. We cannot any longer talk of the setting aside of Law, for intelligent Theists have freely and thankfully accepted from Science her own majestic conception. What is Law but an expression of the Will of God, as we have been able to discover and formulate it? Law is for us like Wordsworth's Duty, 'Stern daughter of the voice of God.

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;  
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh  
and strong.

For us, accordingly, it is no longer possible to think of God as acting on isolated occasions apart from Law: it would involve His denying Himself. For natural laws are only, so to speak, the habits of God. But He may act in apparent defiance of all the laws we know, by applying one of the innumerable laws that we do not know. And these may include laws so exacting in their requirements that they can only operate once in all history. When we discover new laws in creation, we may be interpreting a whole series of what seemed miracles. The timid will cry out that we are explaining miracles away. To a bolder faith it will

rather seem that we are realizing how a rare and strange phenomenon had been provided for in the primaevial scheme of Law, to wait for its manifestation until a Person came who was rare and wonderful enough to set it in motion. We transfer the name of Wonderful from what He did to what He was. We are not careful to assert *a priori* that error could not invade the Gospel story, and what men call non-miraculous events assume the guise of miracle in the eyes of witnesses who had reason enough to expect miracle in the doings of such a Man. But we are in no great hurry to deny the historicity of any specific marvel; for the time may well come, as it has come apparently for many miracles of healing, when the explanation will be discovered, and a new power, perfectly 'natural' in the Perfect Man, reveal itself within that unique Personality.

Here, then, summarized in language almost absurdly brief for so far-reaching a conclusion, we try to set down the resultant in Christian thought after half a century of Darwinism. There is one more aspect of the reaction of science upon Christianity of which I should like to say a word before passing on to describe the new-born science which is the subject of this book. A distinguished Cambridge chemist, Mr. M. M. Pattison Muir, has been writing in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1912, upon the contrast between theological dogma and scientific theory. His language is needlessly scornful, and conveys, I fancy, a misleading impression as to Mr. Muir's own position. I quote his words because they enable me to make a statement about the nature of theological dogma which is vital to my purpose.



I have no wish to criticize Mr. Muir's definitions of scientific theory, partly because they suit my purpose excellently, and partly because (unlike some scientists) I have a rooted horror of the shoemaker who goes beyond his last. Mr. Muir tells us that science gathers facts and then makes theories to explain them, which she is ready to abandon instantly as soon as new facts gainsay them. In sad contrast to this attitude stands the 'inverted science' of theology.

The essence of a theological dogma is its claim to be a declaration made by extra-human authority, which must be accepted by human beings as more real than any religious experiences, and more binding intellectually than any conceptions humanly formed to explain these experiences.

Now I readily admit that not a few theologians, even Protestant theologians, have regarded dogma in this light. I refer to the subject thus early, in connexion with my brief allusion to the Darwinian epoch, because I wish to dissociate myself at the outset of my argument from any such conception of the nature of Christian doctrine. Take the very foundation dogma of all, that of the Person of Christ. As I read it, this is everything that Mr. Muir declares a scientific theory to be. The Church framed her theory at the very beginning to explain facts which had fulfilled themselves in her midst. She developed it in succeeding generations, as facts of the same class accumulated. The theory explains them all, as the laws of motion explain the observed places of the planets. There are difficulties, no doubt. The irregularities of the motion of Uranus were a profound difficulty to believers in the Newtonian

for the conditions in which consciousness plays a part. In itself phonetic law is without exceptions—or, to state it more fully, 'The same sound, at the same period of the same dialect, does not under the same conditions change into two different sounds.' But it is obvious that irregularities in speech are very common. How do they arise? To answer the question we must get the help of psychology, for we state as the corollary of our primary law that apparent exceptions are to be explained by 'analogy.' This means that in an immense variety of words the regular form has been displaced by a conscious or unconscious association with other words to which it has been made to conform. How is it decided whether A shall be assimilated to B, or B to A? It is sheer caprice, seemingly; but even caprice has its laws, and there are usually good reasons to be found to turn the scale. The point of my illustration from a science which is concerned with a human product is that as soon as we begin to apply scientific method to the study of mankind we must remember that the idea of Law takes a very much extended meaning. We may be as insistent as in biology or chemistry upon the rigorous tracing of cause and effect, the patient collecting of facts and the restriction of our theorizing to the explanation of those facts. But while in one whole series of natural sciences we have only the phenomena of inanimate matter to study, in another we must add to them the new factor of Life, with all its innumerable manifestations; and in the highest series we add again the yet more varied factor of Mind. And one important consequence of this last complication is that an element of uncertainty is introduced which science

can never, perhaps, hope to resolve. One human mind cannot in the nature of things make unerring calculation as to the operations of another, even though by the minute study of a very large number of instances we may be able to lay down with general accuracy the lines on which the normal action will go.

It is rather surprising that science waited so long before thinking it worth while to analyse the facts of religion, at any rate in its lower forms. Superstitious beliefs and childish rites of savages were described by missionaries, mostly to bring home to Christian people the depth of darkness out of which the gospel was to lift mankind. Men of science were too busy studying rocks and plants and animals to take interest in the rudimentary forms of human thought. Sooner or later this neglected province was bound to be added to the domain of scientific inquiry; and when the step was once taken, the most amazing energy was expended on making up for lost time. The institutions of primitive religion have been minutely studied by travellers and missionaries, and the results of research classified and interpretation attempted on an immense scale. Merely to look at the backs of the superb books which fill the shelf dedicated to Professor J. G. Frazer's colossal works, *The Golden Bough*, in its nearly completed third edition, and *Totemism and Exogamy*, is to secure a vivid conception of the enormous mass of material now available for the study of the social and religious origins of mankind. To count the 2,736 pages of the seven volumes of the former work, the 1,691 pages of the four volumes of the latter, heightens an impression which reaches its climax when even desultory

turning of the pages has revealed the richness of the massive footnotes giving sources of the facts accumulated above.<sup>1</sup> When we pass from primitive religions to the higher ones, we have an obvious illustration of the wealth of material within our reach in the fifty volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*. The young science may have much to learn, and its interpretations of facts may be drastically revised, for all we know, by subsequent generations. But no one could charge it with neglect of the first duty of scientific inquiry, the exhaustive gathering and classification of material.

That the Comparative Science of Religion must have immense significance for those who defend and those who attack Christian Theism has been very quickly recognized on both sides. In Germany the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode* has been diligently applied to the interpretation of Old Testament and New Testament religion, as we shall shortly see. This has been mostly the application of the study of Oriental and Greek religious ideas. The investigation of primitive religion has been the special province of English scholarship—though we must not overlook the pioneer labours of Mannhardt—and it is not surprising that in our country the influence of Comparative Religion<sup>2</sup> has been, in more fundamental questions still, raised by the study of books like the monumental *Golden Bough*. Of this great work a *Times* reviewer said that it had 'influenced the attitude of the human mind towards

<sup>1</sup> Reference may be made to my paper on Professor Frazer's recent work in the *London Quarterly Review* for January, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> So for convenience I shall continue to call it, though the name has obvious objections. After all, it is shorter than its alternatives, and every one knows what it means.

supernatural beliefs and symbolical rituals more profoundly than any other books published in the nineteenth century except those of Darwin and Herbert Spencer.' To a very different constituency Mr. Blatchford put forth the assertion that no one had any right to an opinion about religion till he had read *The Golden Bough*. I reserve for fuller discussion the intrinsic merits of these statements: at present it is enough to chronicle the fact that they have been made. They represent a vague, but widely current impression that Christianity is no longer the only religion that counts, the only alternative to no religion at all. There are plenty of other religions in the world, which are said by learned men to have many good points, and to be excellently adapted to the tribes that hold them. Missionaries are well known, on the testimony of gin-traders and other trustworthy and impartial witnesses, to be fussy and meddlesome fanatics, much given to the disturbance of sleeping dogs that had better be let lie, and occupied in a propaganda which spoils the native for the purposes he was obviously designed to fulfil. (For a clear explanation of those purposes the inquirer may be referred to the Indians of Putumayo, by favour of the 'civilized' Government of Peru.) In better-educated circles Comparative Religion is of interest as supplying a naturalistic interpretation of the history of a creed that has long claimed to be supernatural. The trouble of reading the *Sacred Books of the East*, even in English, is manifestly more than could be reasonably expected of one who is ready to pronounce a comparative judgement; and the way is therefore open for him to declare with

complete assurance that there are other books as good as the Bible or better. And since there are clear parallels between very primitive religions and certain features of the religion described in the Old Testament, it is possible to bring the latter down to the level of the former, and demonstrate thereby the degrading and childish character of a belief which has too long held even educated men in its outworn fetters.

## V

And the Christian public, who firmly hold to their Faith and its implications—how does the new science touch them? We can see very clearly that the missionary motive, proved by the unparalleled vigour and success of the churches' foreign operations to work as powerfully as ever, has changed radically since the days when our ancestors went forth to save the perishing heathen, as the fireman risks his life to drag helpless women and children out of a blazing house. The Church no longer believes that the All-Father will doom His children to everlasting pain because we have neglected to give them His Gospel. Nor does she believe that the virtues of the heathen are only 'shining vices,' or that Truth has found a home in the Christian world alone—in that part of it, we should rather say, to which we ourselves severally belong! Comparative Religion has brought the Church at home a great access of tolerance, a gift which manifestly has more sides than one. It has helped us to a wider and truer view of God, whose presence in all human history we can realize as our fathers



could not possibly do. But is there danger lest our tolerance should weaken our enthusiasm, that we should fall into a state of what some one called 'sloppy optimism' about the non-Christian world and its need of Christ? Does our new science make us eager to believe all we are told about the beauties of some very ugly things—the profound spirituality, for instance, of Krishna's amours, and other features of the darker side of Hinduism as touched up by Mrs. Besant and her comrades? If so, we might well take alarm at the prospect for our second century of Missions.

I do not wish to turn a blind eye to dangers which undeniably threaten the home base of Missions rather seriously in some quarters. But there is an answer in one word to croakers who imagine that the missionary motive has disappeared with more enlightened views of God and the world. Those of us who were there find 'Edinburgh!' an ejaculation that has all the meaning of 'Hallelujah!' Twelve hundred delegates from all parts of the world assuredly did not travel to the Scottish capital in that memorable June, 1910, merely to bury the old missionary motive and dubiously ask if we could find a new one. The total absence of obscurantism was one of the many marvels of the first truly Oecumenical Council of modern Christendom. There were not a few in that great assembly who held very strong opinions about modernism in all its forms. But a Providence watched over their speech and kept them on lines of profit. The Conference never tried to put the clock back, never compromised the Faith by protests against free and fearless inquiry, never allowed a hint that we had lost our

bearings and knew not whither we were going and why. To the challenge of the Science of Religion Edinburgh gave clear and unfaltering answer in one of the ablest works of our time, the Report of Commission IV. on the Missionary Message. About two hundred men and women, nearly all of them missionaries, contributed material for that masterly volume, which was drafted by a thinker of rare knowledge and grasp, and diligently revised by a Commission including many of the best brains in the Churches of Great Britain, America, and the Continent. That Report alone, with such a consensus behind it, suffices to repel the notion that a new epoch of Christian Missions opens amid doubts and questionings and bewilderment.

The survey of the century helps us to realize that God has been writing His own apologetic, which we have only to translate into our native speech and carry with us into a propaganda more impassioned, more statesmanlike, more daring, than any that history has seen. We have listened ruefully to confident voices telling us that our Bible has been pulled down from its place of solitary authority, that our Creed has been shaken to its foundations by the march of modern knowledge. And the heavens have been silent: no refutation of men's proud dialectic has pealed out in thunder to silence their taunts. There has been no speech nor language; their voice has not been heard. But their line has gone out into all the earth, their words to the end of the world. The Book whose divine authority this enlightened age has so easily overthrown has quietly gone forth and worked miracles on a vaster scale than ever. It is really not worth



while to stop and argue whether these miracles demonstrate Inspiration—enough to point to country after country where this Book has tamed the savage, and demand evidence that any other book, or all other books together, can do the like. When is the Rationalist Press Association, Limited, proposing to take up the oft-repeated challenge that it should achieve the same results with its enchantments? When is it going to ship a cargo of the best literature to some island that is still cannibal-haunted, with trained teachers to enforce by Pure Reason the extreme undesirableness of a diet such as theirs? Why do these clever and convinced propagandists confine their work to this country, when they might so easily put their whole case to a decisive test, which by success would close our lips for ever? Why indeed? We know why, and so do they!

We have heard dismal proofs of the decadence of religion in Europe, and in our own land. The membership of the Churches has fallen and is falling; men are ceasing to care about another world, and are busy making this visible world more habitable. Very likely. The stream has its backwaters, and things will have to get very much worse before they match the condition of England on that day when John Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed.' But if religion were never so decadent in England, it is amazingly vigorous with new and hopeful life in the mission-field. The progress of the world as a whole is not necessarily bound up with the maintenance of the virility of the white races, which they have received from Christianity. We are teaching China now; it may be that some day we shall learn. Meanwhile our modern Apology may put in its

first chapter the fact that in days when faith is supposed to be languishing a vast world-wide federation has sprung up in the student class, which has realized catholic unity in the determination to evangelize the world before old age has come on those who take this watchword now.

We have mourned over 'our unhappy divisions.' The hostile world has wondered and scoffed at us, so heated over trifles, so strenuous in flouting other Christians who differ on points no outsider could hope to understand. And here again God has defended the essential unity of His Church in His own way. Let Christians only realize the supreme claim of world-evangelization, and secondary matters will soon take second place. We shall not reach external union—God forbid! Federation is incomparably better for the health and the freedom of the Church; and towards this Edinburgh unmistakably showed the way. A really living Christianity can never be uniform: it is only in the winter that the trees are nearly alike. But we are rapidly learning how to master all the real evils of division, retaining our own distinctive tenets and institutions, but working in free alliance with those who in the one central belief and purpose are one with us. I was recently a member of a small conference called to frame a working creed, which in the fewest possible words was to include all that was really vital for a declaration of Christian discipleship. We were High Church, Low Church, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, and probably others. We discussed our problem earnestly for nearly five hours; but five minutes would have proved sufficient if we had only had to express what we all believed,

and all believed to be central. That experience of doctrinal unity will serve as an object-lesson of the principles on which the future will bring an end to the scandal of Christian disunion, and a realization of John Wesley's desire for an 'offensive and defensive alliance with every true soldier of Jesus Christ.'

Does not the century's retrospect, after all, bid us thank God and take courage?

## CHAPTER II

### COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

THE title of this chapter would, of course, cover an extremely wide inquiry, involving nothing less than the whole trend of modern research into the doctrines and narratives of the Bible as affected by the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode*.<sup>1</sup> To attempt this would demand the scale of an encyclopaedia, and qualifications to which the present writer lays no claim. I only propose to make some selections which may help us to see how far really fundamental questions are affected by the new instrument of research. I shall be combining in this chapter two perfectly distinct inquiries, linked only by the fact that both arise directly out of Comparative Religion. First I ask whether the results of our science have done anything to shake the general credit of our Christian documents. Then I proceed to the still wider question, how far Comparative Religion will help us to frame a general theory of the divers manners in which God has made Himself known to men.

<sup>1</sup> I despair of the effort to find an English term to render this compact though rather sesquipedalian compound. 'Religious-historical method' is not English, nor clear, and 'religio-historical' is worse. 'The method based on Comparative Religion,' or, if we must be precise, 'the Comparative Science of Religion,' is the shortest form in which we can express it. It is not often that our cousins get such an advantage over us in brevity!

## I

It will be convenient to approach the first question by way of the extremists who have done their best to bring the whole method into contempt. Having entertained ourselves for a few paragraphs with their learned absurdities, we can then recall that the progress of every science is attended by camp-followers of this class, who must not be taken too seriously or allowed to discredit a sound method by their extravagances. We shall thus be free to pay respectful attention to the pleas of sober science, and to accept from it what may appear to be proved.

We are suffering just now rather severely from an epidemic of the solar myth, not unlike that which raged half a century ago, and exhausted itself by the failure to find any more subjects on which to fasten. Adequate freedom from the restraints of science and common sense will enable a fertile imagination to equate any given historical name to the name of some Oriental deity, and thus to take a soaring flight into the sky, where the Signs of the Zodiac are willing to account for anything and anybody. The other day I imprudently purchased ten dozen marvellous pages by Dr. Martin Gemoll, entitled *The Indo-Europeans in the Ancient East: Mythological-historical Discoveries and Enquiries*.<sup>1</sup> Herr Gemoll apparently belongs to the legion of ingenious enthusiasts who have rushed down a steep place after the astral mythologists into the *Mare Absurdum*. He is convinced not only that Ahura (Mazdah, the deity of Zoroastrianism) and Asshur

<sup>1</sup> *Die Indogermanen im alten Orient—mythologisch-historische Funde und Fragen* (1911).

are identical, which is very possible, though not on his lines, but also that Abram, Aaron and Arthur are allotropic forms of the same element. The close relation between Monmouth and Macedon is a fact of the same order. But all this learned fooling is not a whit inferior to the elaborate argumentation of much better-known men like Jensen, who, having failed to convince scholarship by a book on the Hittites, has lately appealed to the masses with a proof that Moses, Jesus, and Paul were only variations on Gilgamesh, the mythical hero of the old Babylonian epic. An amusing feature about the recent astral mythology craze, which English readers may now follow as far as they care to do in a big book by Dr. Jeremias, is that its pioneers seem to have neglected the obvious precaution of learning some elementary astronomy.<sup>1</sup> The experts should have been asked when the Zodiac was first devised, and their answer would have pointed to a maximum antiquity beyond which our amateurs have cheerfully wandered many centuries.

Better known and more important than these mad-cap speculations, but not perhaps more plausible, are the combinations by which another recent school has demonstrated that Jesus is wholly mythical. Three nations may lay claim to this great discovery, but I shall not attempt to assign priority. An American professor of mathematics, Mr. W. B. Smith, wrote a book (in German)<sup>2</sup> called *The pre-Christian Jesus*,

<sup>1</sup> Compare a paper by Mr. E. W. Maunder, of Greenwich Observatory, in the *London Quarterly Review* for October, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Smith has since taken pity on the benightedness of English readers and republished the book in English under the title *Ecce Deus*. Intending readers will be careful not to confuse the book with one under the same title by the late Dr. Parker.

showing that 'Jesus' was the name of a god worshipped in Palestine a century or so B.C. A learned Englishman, Mr. J. M. Robertson, now more usefully employed in politics, wrote *Pagan Christs*, in which a mass of analogies from all sorts of fields satisfactorily explained how the Christ myth was put together. Finally, Professor Arthur Drews, of Jena, made a sensation in Germany by his *Christ Myth*, and the propaganda with which he has followed it up. His predecessors, Smith and Robertson, have supplied him with materials in plenty, including sometimes statements on points of fact which surprise experts in fields where the bold generalizer has ventured without a guide. The leaders of Liberal theology in Germany have been following Drews about, confuting from sober science a paradox which threatens to discredit the whole fabric of free and serious research. I need not, I think, waste time on expounding, still less on refuting, this truly wonderful discovery; but I may spend a sentence or two in pointing its moral. In historical inquiries it is well to remember that daily life proves abundantly the length of the arm of coincidence. The *reductio ad absurdum* applied so effectively by Whately in his *Historic Doubts* as to Napoleon's existence, and by Henry Rogers, in a brilliant apologue in the *Eclipse of Faith*, could be very easily brought up to date to expose the absurd misuse of the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode*.<sup>1</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> The day may come when students of ancient history, burrowing among the records of religious thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, may light upon the names of Robertson and Smith, dim and curious figures to whom were attributed 'doctrines that could be held by no sane man.' Will they not fasten on the fact that a real and



page of history, or a minute description of some present-day custom, could be proved mythical by setting against its several items skilfully selected parallels from ancient history, from fable or folklore. The process is facilitated by the writer's liberty to describe his parallels in terms suggested by the comparison he has in mind. It will be found constantly that this comparison exercises a powerful unconscious influence on the narrator's selection of details. Let me give an illustration, for the point is rather important. The story of the birth of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew has been diligently interpreted by parallels from Gentile mythology. And in all the parallels, to be sure, we have a boy of wonderful character born of divine parentage from a human mother. If that were all, it might be not unreasonably claimed that the Gentile fable influenced the Jewish story, assuming that it could be shown to be familiar in the atmosphere where the latter arose. But these stories are not told in such general terms. They are full of detail, and the details are the very *raison d'être* of the story. Who could tell of the birth of Perseus and leave out Danae's brazen tower and the shower of gold in which Zeus visited her? And when thus told, the very resemblance of what we take to be the central *motif* disappears behind the picturesque setting. An attempt has been made to bring in a Persian myth as to the miraculous birth of the still future world-deliverer. It is only necessary to tell the story to see at once how grotesque is the idea of

still famous scholar, Robertson Smith, was supposed to have uttered heresies in his own day? The two little men were only distorted duplicates of the one great man!



linking it with the opening of our New Testament. The utmost that could rationally be deduced from these Gentile myths would be the possibility that in some early Christian circles the knowledge of heathen heroes who were said to have divine parentage prompted a kind of rivalry, producing a story which contained this element. This brings in a whole crop of new problems, which I need not discuss.

It might well seem that we have spent time enough on a mere disease of criticism; but for the moment the disease is endemic in certain quarters, and it will not be wise to ignore it. In a very short time probably even the Rationalist Press Association will be ashamed of the endorsement they have affixed to that and every other novel absurdity, however mutually destructive, which might seem to discredit religion. The most crushing reply to Mr. Robertson that I have seen is in *The Literary Guide* for December, 1912. It is from Dr. F. C. Conybeare, the one distinguished scholar whom the R. P. A. has lately enlisted to attack Christianity from the standpoint of biblical and patristic learning. The peculiar bitterness of Dr. Conybeare's own book will show that it is no Christian bias that prompts him to write in the Rationalist journal to refute Mr. Robertson's 'hypercriticism passing into credulity.' He enumerates in chronological order 'twelve documentary sources, independent one of the other, and all referring to, and involving, the historical personality of Jesus.' The first eight of these are from the New Testament, and all fall 'between about 50 and 120 A.D.' Dr. Conybeare makes delightful play with

Mr. Robertson's 'pre-philological' equations of names, and quotes a delicious passage in which Mary is rediscovered in Myrrha, Maia, Maira, Maya, Merris, and the Moirai—mythical figures brought together from Egypt, India, and elsewhere. I must not quote more, but content myself with the peroration :

Enough. Mr. Robertson's explanations of the origins of Christianity are many times more miraculous than anything in the Gospels, and require of us, in order to their acceptance, far more credulity than would satisfy the present Pope.

Sometimes Satan does cast out Satan—I use the comparison without prejudice !

The other general remark I wish to make is that this universal scepticism is the inevitable though exaggerated outcome of the negative criticism of generations past. We cannot read the brilliant *résumé* of a century of criticism in Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* without drawing at least the main inference which the writer means us to draw. Between them, these negative critics, who will not venture on the last logical step themselves, have destroyed piecemeal all real ground of confidence in a kernel of history in our Gospels. They were held back from abandoning the historicity of Jesus by a lingering instinct for history, which taught them that consequences must have adequate causes behind. To this extent they showed critical power superior to that of Drews and his school. But it must be allowed that in many of them also there was a hypertrophy of the critical faculty tending to destroy the historical sense. The difficulties and inconsistencies they found in the

narrative are very often indeed only difficulties and inconsistencies which abound in every concise story of real life, vanishing as soon as the story is told in full. I am almost loth to pass this judgement, for I believe heartily in a minute and faithful criticism even of the Gospel story, and I should count it disloyalty to the Gospel itself if I were to foreclose the result. But I cannot resist the impression, when I read some criticism, that it is much easier to accept the original story, with a few unsolved problems which a little imagination might account for, than to explain the existence of the myth to which for the sake of these difficulties we reduce the story. We burn the house down to roast the pig, and find that the pig is half burnt and half raw !

## II

I turn, then, from the Anarchists of Criticism to the Radicals and the sober Liberals, with whom we may expect to have more sympathy, even if we cannot follow them everywhere. I limit myself to the criticism that employs Comparative Religion as its instrument. The most conspicuous of these pioneers is Professor H. Gunkel, of Berlin. His *Creation and Chaos* traced old Babylonian myths in the imagery of Genesis and Revelation, and in a few other places. This part of his work need not detain us, though it has very great interest for biblical exegesis. It supplies a source for what is avowedly figurative, and leaves practically untouched what stands as a narrative of fact. Interpreters of the old school would take exception to the

application of this method to the Book of Jonah. But it can hardly be questioned any longer, even among conservative scholars, that the book is an allegorical apologue, which uses the name of an historical prophet, but in no other respect pretends to narrate facts. The modern reading lifts this little pamphlet to the very highest level of Old Testament prophecy, and restores us 'the finest foreign missionary tract ever written.' Naturally, if its story is of this order, we gain considerably by anything that shows us how the writer secured the elements of his picture: if they came from folklore familiar to his readers, the grotesqueness of the details is both explained and condoned. Gunkel's later work, an application of Comparative Religion to the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> raises much more fundamental questions, in the brief compass of less than a hundred pages. I must endeavour to summarize Gunkel's position, for it is that of a school exercising great influence, and we could not have the doctrine expressed with more authority. The essence of it is that we have tried to explain the New Testament too exclusively out of the Old.

We Christians have no foundation whatever for the assumption that only out of Israel could arise all that is good and valuable in religion. Such a Jewish Chauvinism would sound very strange on our lips. The seed of divine revelation was not sown exclusively on Jewish soil (p. 14).

Again (p. 95) :

Christianity, which was destined to be preached to many nations, was itself born of no one single nation,

<sup>1</sup> *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen, 1903).

but grew out of a great and complex history of many nations. But, as Bousset puts it, 'Judaism was the retort in which the various elements were mixed.'

Professor Gunkel observes that it was a providential element in the development of Christianity that it had its classic age just when it passed from the Oriental into the Greek world, so that it took its part in both. It is frankly a syncretic religion, gathering some of its most vital doctrines, and both its sacraments, from sources which have hitherto escaped recognition. But he is very careful to provide against an unwarrantable inference.

'How incomparably higher in value,' justly exclaims Pfeleiderer, 'are these mysteries (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) than all the mysteries of paganism!' We need in truth have no anxiety lest this historical derivation of Christianity should depreciate its value; it will only by contrast set it in the brightest light (p. 85).

Out of the study of Oriental religion in ancient times emerges the vague outline of a more or less universal syncretism, which is held to have exerted considerable influence on pre-Christian Judaism. It is admitted that the evidence is scanty, but Gunkel urges that we cannot explain the New Testament without the assumption. The Synoptic Gospels present to us a Figure which stands entirely in the succession of Old Testament prophecy. The Synoptic Jesus is too great and too simple to admit fantastic elements into His teaching: He has no use for imagery drawn from foreign mythologies. But there is, Gunkel insists, a great contrast when we turn to the Christ of Paul and John, nor will any use of the Old Testament explain it.

How has this new element come into primitive Christianity? Not through the historical Jesus, as the Synoptists describe Him, with whom are wanting the conceptions of 'redemption, adoption, justification, regeneration, the gift of the Spirit' (p. 87).

These conceptions, we are apparently to assume, are growths from a germ supplied by Oriental religions in which the idea of redemption (*Erlösung*) is prominent. I must parenthetically express some surprise at the last item in this list of Pauline indebtedness, which Gunkel quotes from Wernle. I certainly thought I had read passages in the Old Testament, such as those which Luke quotes in Acts ii., which a thinker of far less profundity than Paul might have ventured to connect with a gift of the Spirit. But reserving criticism for a later stage, let me quote a little more to show how this able and discerning writer puts his case. Here is the answer (p. 94) to the question how the New Testament Christology—which *ex hypothesi* is an already existing system, built up within pre-Christian Judaism out of elements partly native and partly borrowed—came to be applied to Jesus:

When Jesus appeared in His superhuman exaltation, when He won men's hearts and His disciples believed He was the Christ, His enthusiastic followers applied to Him the loftiest language that Judaism knew how to frame. But this Christology was not devised in order to probe the secret of His Person, as though Jesus were the original and the Christology secondary. Rather, souls that longed for the nearness of God, and felt their need of a Son of God manifested from heaven, transferred to Him their hearts' ideals. The New Testament Christology is then a mighty hymn which history sings to Jesus.



As Gunkel puts it succinctly just before, speaking of some mythological imagery in the Apocalypse, and the gospel picture of the childhood, the descent into hell, and the ascension,

All this has been transferred to Jesus because it belonged to Christ before.

It would seem that it had 'belonged to Christ' for a long time, for we read (p. 78) with reference to the Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah :

There is in the last resort no other explanation than that the figure of a dying and rising God stands in the background, which Judaism adapted after its own manner, interpreted as a great Prophet of Yahweh, and adorned it with features of Israel's destiny.

The syncretism, therefore, took place early enough to enter into the history of the 'Servant' passages, a point that would repay further discussion. As this last extract raises a subject to which I want to return, I will make one further quotation, which sets it forth more fully (p. 77) :

The history of religion teaches us that Jesus Christ is by no means the only and the first being of a divine nature in whose resurrection from the dead men have believed. The belief in the death and rising again of gods is indeed well known to the East in many places. We know it from Egypt, where it is most of all at home, but also from Babylonia, Syria, and Phoenicia. In Crete a tomb of Zeus was shown—of course an Empty Tomb! The resurrection of these gods is originally a phenomenon of nature, interpreted as a manifestation of a divine life. The gods of the sun and of vegetation die in winter and rise anew

every spring. There can accordingly be no question that the form in which the resurrection of the divine being is presented in primitive Christianity is the same as in those foreign religions, however widely the *content* of the belief may differ in the case of the disciples of Jesus from that found in paganism.

Professor Gunkel elsewhere expressly intimates that he is not suggesting that his comparisons invalidate the *fact* of the resurrection of Jesus. He leaves it an open question what lies behind it, hinting at the extraordinary impression made by Jesus upon His disciples as an important factor. But he thinks the form of the story has been very much affected by the influences he has been describing. Thus the 'three days' or 'third day'—a variation which he thinks significant—has arisen from an extraneous source which is also responsible for the three days of Jonah and the three and a half of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

To enter upon any adequate criticism of this theory—a kind of inversion of the old doctrine of 'types'—would take me too far from the main purpose of the lecture, though I have felt that I could not ignore it in an attempt to show what Comparative Religion has to do with Christian Faith. It is, I think, frequently vulnerable in detail;<sup>1</sup> and I doubt whether the evidence for this syncretism is always abundant enough to bear the weight laid on it. Since Gunkel and Pfeiderer themselves are emphatic on the immeasurable superiority of the Jewish-Christian resultant to the forces which

<sup>1</sup> The use made of Persian religion by distinguished writers of this school is a subject of examination in my *Hibbert Lectures*. The matter is naturally too technical to be discussed here.



are supposed to have set it in motion, the question occurs to us whether we might not as easily conceive such an intellectual and spiritual giant as Paul to have thought out the whole scheme, of which he is allowed to be the originator as far as concerns nearly all that really matters. (I put aside, for argument's sake, all reference to Inspiration.) Modern theories seem to me not infrequently to underestimate the capacity of individual genius, in the praiseworthy effort to discover the parentage of ideas. And in this case, if we simply take our Synoptic witnesses and abstain from weeding out of them what does not suit our theories, there were sufficient hints in the words of Jesus Himself to start a profound mind like Paul's on the quest of an interpretation. Paul himself in any case thought his interpretations came from 'the Scriptures.' Of course, if those Scriptures themselves had received influences from outside, the new theory only differs from the old in a minor matter; but Gunkel is perhaps a little inconsistent here, in that he urges that the new development of Paulinism lies apart from the Old Testament, while declaring that the most important of all the prophets was largely influenced by the same foreign elements. Apart from these considerations, for which due allowance ought to be made, I should be unwilling to reject Gunkel's general theory on *a priori* grounds. I see not the slightest reason for prejudice against the doctrine that our New Testament religion is to some extent a 'syncretism,' indebted to other religions than Judaism for pregnant hints. I am indeed very much drawn to it in the abstract, and am conscious of a distinct sense of disappointment when the evidence for particular applications

seems to fail. That the final Religion should have taken toll from the best elements in other religions, as well as from that out of which it immediately arose, seems to me a natural expectation, and one that need raise no alarm in a Christian mind.

### III

One special application of Comparative Religion has been very much to the fore of late. Professors Cumont and Reitzenstein have given us most valuable researches on the 'Mystery Religions' of the early Roman Empire, which have prompted some far-reaching comparisons. In his brilliant book on Paul's earlier epistles, Professor Kirsopp Lake has gone so far as to declare that primitive Christianity was a Mystery Religion itself. In that declaration he would, of course, endorse Pfleiderer's strong expression, quoted above (p. 31), as to the incomparable superiority of the Christian Mysteries to those which are supposed to have originally supplied a motive power in their development. When we look at Baptism and the Supper in the Synoptists, we are little troubled with questions as to their origin. John the Baptist took up the obvious symbolism of washing, familiar to every Jew from the temple ritual, and significantly extended it from ceremonial to moral defilement. Anxious inquirers, after confessing their sins, were plunged in the Jordan waters, far away from any holy place made with hands, to assure them that even as they had washed away the uncleanness of the body, so would God cleanse the guilt of the

penitent soul. There is no 'mystery' here, in either technical or popular sense—only the simplest and most helpful of acted parables, giving to the troubled heart just that minimum of support from an outward action that can react through the senses on the soul. There is no evidence from the Synoptists that during the ministry of Jesus the Baptist's rite was taken up at all. We have in fact the significant antithesis, preserved for us in our oldest gospel source, between the 'water baptism' of John and the 'Spirit and fire baptism' of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel, in its one allusion to the rite (iii. 22, 26, iv. 1, 2), preserves the memory of the fact that Jesus Himself did not baptize, but tells us that the disciples did, which is clear enough from the Acts. The due subordination of the rite is retained all through the New Testament. Peter preaches to the household of Cornelius the 'true and lively Word,' but bids others administer the sacrament of baptism. Paul thanks God that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Word. Entirely in keeping with this perfect simplicity is the Supper as it appears in the Synoptists. Even if the interpolation from 1 Corinthians in Luke xxii. 19, 20 were genuine there—which, *pace* some distinguished critics, seems to me absolutely impossible<sup>1</sup>—there is nothing to take the Supper out of the category of the acted parable. Just as the body needs food, so does the soul; and Jesus uses the simple symbolism of the common meal to bring home to His disciples the promise that His life, just about to be offered,

<sup>1</sup> Note by the way how the curious reversal of order in Luke, who on the above reading puts the cup first, reflects the order which Paul uses in 1 Cor. x. 16, though not in xi. 23 ff.

should be their divinely appointed spiritual food and drink. The new covenant, promised through Jeremiah, is to be inaugurated, like the old, with blood :<sup>1</sup> before another meal the Master will have passed through the gates of death to claim His kingdom. When we add to this account the words of institution recorded by Paul, we find the disciples bidden to make every common meal a fresh reminder of this, which is to be the very foundation of their spiritual life. There are those who regard this view of the Supper as in some way lower than that which we turn to next. They cannot allow it to be 'only a commemoration.' *Only!* It surely depends on what is commemorated; and when we are bidden to let every meal remind us that our Master and Lord died for us, to make His offered life the very food of our soul, I find it hard to understand what we could possibly add to the commemorative parable which would enhance its infinite value. Meanwhile we observe that in this primitive Marcan account of the Supper we have, woven into the very fabric so that it cannot be removed without tearing the whole to shreds, a declaration that the approaching death of Jesus is to be the inauguration of the prophetic new covenant between God and man, and further that it imparts a divine food to the believer. Did Jesus of Nazareth really say this on that Thursday evening in Jerusalem? We can only deny it on

<sup>1</sup> Note how entirely in the spirit of the Old Testament the writer to the Hebrews (ix. 16-18) brings out the essential connexion. The Greek in him (or her?) comes out in the additional illustration drawn from the only meaning that the word *διαθήκη* would convey to an ordinary speaker of Greek in the first century, if unacquainted with the Septuagint, that of 'testament,' 'will.'

subjective grounds. He 'could not' have said it, because we have here a foreshadowing of the doctrine of redemption! If that argument proves unconvincing to those who have a prejudice in favour of conclusions derived from evidence, we ask next in what respect Paul was an innovator.

But my present text is the Mystery Religions, and I come back to them by the obvious remark that the sacraments in the subsequent history of Christendom have travelled a long way from what I have depicted as the Synoptic Gospels' account of them. To the great majority of professing Christians to-day—for when it comes to counting heads, uncompromising Protestants are like Isaiah's 'remnant'—the sacraments have in full what constituted the essence of the Mysteries. They are acts which must be performed according to certain fixed traditional rules, and they bring spiritual gifts in what is sometimes a purely magical way. The eternal salvation of a helpless infant may be imperilled by our neglect to pour water on its brow and utter the Triune Name. The 'validity' of the Eucharist depends on the 'orders' of the 'priest' who 'consecrates' it; and for the thoroughgoing inheritor of the old Mystery Religion the Anglican Bishop is as incapable of transmitting the mystic prerogative as the President of the Wesleyan Conference. This is, of course, sheer syncretism. In this, as in a host of other points in which the Pope and Peter do not agree, Rome has carried over from old religions a mass of ideas which have no possible affiliation to the Gospels. Now, as I shall be urging presently, that does not in itself carry with it

condemnation. When we are dealing with means of grace, the only thing that matters is the grace. If that really comes, all is well: the only wrong is when a man who gets grace by another channel than that which supplies his brother insists that his own is the sole way appointed of God. Protestants as well as Romans sometimes forget that the wind of God bloweth where it listeth, and that He fulfils Himself in many ways. The Mass has no doubt a 'heathen' ancestry. But in the eyes of the angels there is no difference that matters between the devout Roman kneeling before the altar and the devout Quaker feeding on Christ while he eats his supper at home. Our own practice differs widely; but we can thankfully acknowledge that the Real Presence is as sure for each of them as for ourselves.

But granted what is fairly obvious, that the so-called 'Catholic' idea of the sacraments has an exceedingly close relation to the old Mystery Religions, we have to ask on which side Paul stands. Is he implicated in the connexion with the Mysteries? In itself we need not regard the question as very serious. Paul's intensely receptive and yet original mind was quite capable of taking a suggestive hint from the world in which he worked. Nor was the first and greatest of missionaries wanting in that sympathy which comes only after zeal in the list of the missionary's qualifications. The implication of Paul's constant references to the Greek games has been well brought out in recent work. The fact that the Isthmian festival was closely bound up with Greek religion did not prevent Paul from drawing lessons from it for the



Corinthian converts, and doing it in language which betrays real interest in the many fine features of the national<sup>\*</sup> institution. That religion which he came to supplant was the only way the people had of approaching God; and if in their Mysteries they found their souls lifted above the material world into fellowship with Something which they worshipped in ignorance but yet sincerely, we may be sure that Paul looked on with thankfulness, and was ready to extract from their worship the permanent and precious elements that could be lifted into a higher sphere. The difficulty comes in when it is said that Paul carries over that practically magical element which made the mere act operative in itself. It is claimed that he regards baptism as a rite of initiation which produces, instead of merely symbolizing, incorporation into Christ; that he finds such awful significance in the act of eating and drinking what represents the Lord's body and blood that he thinks the death of some members to be a judgement on them for unworthily partaking. The question needs extremely careful handling, for we are conscious of about equal unwillingness to desert Paul and to believe in magic. Professor Lake has raised a question really fundamental for Protestantism, which, if the matter stood as it was put in the last sentence, would certainly have a serious dilemma to deal with. I must not deviate into a discussion of the question here,<sup>1</sup> but will content myself with a line or two. No one can read Paul without

<sup>1</sup> The reader may be referred to a recent series of papers in the *Expositor* by one of our foremost Paulinists, Professor H. A. A. Kennedy.

realizing how intensely symbolic is his thought. The symbol and the thing symbolized seem for him to be so intertwined that the language of one can be transferred to the other. There is a striking contrast between this artificial habit of thought, the product of Rabbinic training, and the thought of Jesus, which always ran in parable. For Him everything had its parable: beneath the surface of all phenomena He saw resemblances which illustrated the manifold aspects of the kingdom of God—the seen only the obverse of the unseen, linked with it by the unity of Him who created both. Symbol may be said to be parable crystallized. The latter is perfectly elastic, taken up for a momentary purpose, to illuminate a single point, and put aside for another illustration which is to keep us from forgetting how many facets there are in the jewel of Truth. In minds of a certain temperament, largely resulting from the religious environment of earlier years, what once had all the freedom of a parable is worked up again and again, till a symbol emerges which is liable to be almost confused with the reality that underlies it. If, then, Paul had come to dwell on the symbol of the Supper till the intense 'remembrance' it brought with it made the bread and wine melt away into a vision of the broken Body and the poured-out Blood, we can hardly wonder if he thought that an irreverent and thoughtless treatment of a symbol so awful would bring condign judgement on one who had counted common the Blood of the Covenant with which he might have been sanctified.

Now, this line of treatment has, I am well aware, the nature of a compromise, in a matter where

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good Protestants are not very much inclined to compromise. There are two fundamental varieties of temperament which separate serious and thoughtful men into two camps in all departments of life. Liberals and Conservatives, men of progress and men of caution, men of the future and men who canonize the past—we know both types in politics, in science, art, and learning. We know that both are indispensable, and ought to recognize how much each needs to be corrected and supplemented by what the other can give. And in religion these temperaments tend to what we call Protestant and Catholic—thoroughly bad names both, but made almost inevitable by use. It would seem that the love of symbol is one of the hall-marks of the latter type of mind. Speaking as an ultra-Protestant, who nevertheless tries his best to understand and appreciate a temperament opposite to his own, I should say that our habit of thought naturally looks away from symbol towards parable as a richer and freer means of grace. And yet I have just frankly allowed that Paul is here on the other side—Paul, whom Luther re-discovered and built on him the very foundation doctrine of Protestantism! Well, I do not grudge our 'Catholic' fellow-Christians their share in Paul. For the features of the two temperaments are happily not mutually exclusive, and there is not a little crossing of the tendencies characteristic of each. Otherwise the Conservative Free Churchman and the Radical Anglican or Roman would be impossible incongruities, and our politics and our church life alike would be the poorer. It is just as well that we should recognize that the roots

of all our later divisions lie deep in human nature as visible in the New Testament itself. The best side of the 'Catholic' has most affinities with Peter and James, who could never quite abandon a hallowed past, and loved the rites and rules of the Church of their fathers, even when they had been superseded by fulfilment in the Christ. And we recognize our spiritual ancestor in Paul, who so joyfully threw over ceremonies and holy days and mystic rites of immemorial antiquity, and boldly flung himself on justification by faith alone. Yet there are some of us Protestants who find the Epistle of James profoundly satisfying and entirely Protestant.<sup>1</sup> It is no great mischief if we in our turn concede that in his love of symbol Paul belongs to the other side. The New Testament age, of course, shows these cleavages only in their initial stage. Men were too near to Jesus to suffer the harm which the exaggeration of these human tendencies was to bring. We shall draw nearer again, it may be, to that one source and spring of unity, and then even these fundamental differences will lessen. And the way to that unity will be by the common work on the evangelization of the world.

## IV

I pass on to another aspect of the Science of Religion, which has, however, been foreshadowed by several points already made. From the time of Justin

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, implies that the Epistle of James is really by the Brother of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Why I think so, and how I try to meet the difficulties of the Epistle, I have set forth in the *Expositor* for July, 1907.

Martyr onwards men have noticed the startling parallels between the deepest Christian verities and some very conspicuous ideas of paganism. The earliest theory accused the devil of the caricature. For various reasons the theory is out of favour just now ; and alternative theories, which our age regards as more plausible, are fluttering the hearts of sundry enthusiasts, who cherish the fond hope that at last an explosive has been devised powerful enough to make a breach in the wall of the Jericho they hope to storm. The case in brief stands thus. One large volume of *The Golden Bough* bears the title *The Dying God*. It contains a massive collection of examples, gathered from all over the world, to show how primitive man conceives a divine power to reside in kings, and provides against the weakening of it through age and decay by killing the divine man while still in his prime, and passing on his spirit to a successor. Out of this strange notion arose a great variety of uses and beliefs, all centring on the general conception of a god in human form, who is destined to die and rise to new life. Even in the higher religions there were myths which preserved survivals of this primitive belief. One of them has been already alluded to, the Cretan Tomb of Zeus. It may be easily imagined that the deeper thinkers rebelled against such a degradation of the idea of deity. Dr. Rendel Harris has been fortunate enough to discover in Syriac what can be shown to be derived from four hexameter lines of Epimenides, the Cretan philosopher, who migrated to Athens in the sixth century B.C.

A grave have they fashioned for thee, O Zeus,  
highest and greatest—the Cretans, always liars,

evil beasts, idle gluttons. But thou art not dead, for to eternity thou livest and standest, for in thee we live and move and have our being.<sup>1</sup>

Since, then, the world was already possessed of the idea that divine saviours brought blessing to men by dying and returning to life, there is *prima facie* room for a theory that the disciples of Jesus won back their belief in their Master's divine mission, shaken by the staggering blow of His death, by transferring to Him the popular idea, and making the human Prophet fulfil the hopes so pathetically reposed in Him, by becoming a God doomed to die. Such a theory might even be put in a form entirely consistent with the Church's central doctrine: the popular belief would thus become the providential instrument through which the first Christians came to realize their foundation truth. I do not think this is required by the facts; but I can quite believe that this widespread conception was a real help to the spread of the Gospel in some parts of the early mission field. There are other less plausible forms of the theory based on the 'dying God' of anthropology, agreeing in their achievement of a 'naturalistic' account of Jesus of Nazareth. As has been already noted, the extremists use the new material to dispose of the whole story: Jesus is a God from the first and nothing else—the Cross is as mythical as the Manger,

<sup>1</sup> I have quoted this because of its twofold citation in New Testament passages bearing Paul's name, Titus i. 12 and Acts xvii. 28. I am tempted to a new punctuation of the latter verse: 'For in Him we live and move and have our being (as some even of your own poets have said), for we are also His offspring.' The parenthesis applies to the words on each side of it. By the way, Mr. A. B. Cook tells me the Tomb of Zeus in Crete is still called by this name, and the site marked by a chapel of 'the Lord Christ' (*Ἀφέντης Χριστός*).

and the Docetists of early Christendom are at last outdone.

There are other related uses of anthropological material affecting various parts of the biblical system of religion ; but for my purpose it will be enough to describe and examine the one which cuts deepest. Why we cannot accept a theory which makes us regard the Gospels as records of mere myth, or one which transforms the Jesus they describe either into an unreal Man, or into a mere Man and nothing more, has been argued already. We are pledged to no dogma, supernaturally announced, and binding our intellects by an authority we cannot escape. For us the infallibilities are gone, and we are glad to see them go. For we can see clearly that God meant nothing to intervene between our souls and Truth—no Church, no Pope, not even a Bible : every man is responsible directly to God for what he believes. But we do not find that the new theories help us any more than the old to explain the facts. That the Carpenter of Nazareth was as real a Man as ourselves, but a perfect Man, since He was the very God manifested in human flesh, is a theory which still explains the facts as no rival theory will. And therefore we have to ask whether we cannot form a theory of our own which will correlate the new facts with the old.

## V

Our theory will depend ultimately on the view we take of the manner in which God has spoken to man. We know how He speaks now. It is a voice

within the soul, often intensely real and vivid and unmistakable, but in form and mode of presentation not differing from other thoughts. \*There are rare occasions when the senses appear to be affected, and external sounds or sights bring the conviction home. But no one would wish to put such experiences into the category of the miraculous, as the man of the world understands the term. God speaks within the nature His own hand framed, and speaks through the laws of that nature, which we may reasonably suppose He laid down so as to provide for this highest of all the purposes they were ever to serve. And of course His own immanence was to be the mightiest and most vital of all the conditions under which those laws of man's development were destined to work. We have seen already, and shall have to reiterate often, that God's laws can never be imagined as acting apart from Himself. If all this is true, we must expect to find Revelation following the lines of human nature, these lines having been designed by the Creator to make a way not only for the minor ends of man's existence, but also for that which if real at all must be the supreme end, the understanding of God. Does it not follow that when God prepares the climax of His providences, whereby man is to be taught the very utmost about God that he can ever learn, He will bring into it all the most characteristic lines along which human thought has groped towards the divine? Men have travelled by many diverse and strange roads on their quest after God. Put if the journey has been guided by the deep instincts of human nature, which has a wonderful unity all the world over, it is not strange if all those



roads prove to go straight towards the 'green hill far away.'

This *a priori* argument is strengthened by a consideration drawn from one of the first principles of anthropological science. The novice, reading any section of an encyclopaedic work like *The Golden Bough*, finds it almost impossible to believe that the scores of parallel uses described there can be independent. But they come from all ages of history, and from every part of the world; and the emphatic decision of the man of science is that their similarity results only from the fact that the human mind has been working upon the same outward conditions, and has shown its own general unity by reaching similar conclusions. When, therefore, we find so strange an idea as this of the Dying God figuring all the world over in forms which vary just enough to make their independence plain, we are driven to the conclusion that there is something in it which starts from first principles, and comes out of the central instincts of humanity. It is a note harsh and crude enough, as we hear it from the rude instrument of the primitive savage. But it is after all the same note as that which sounds, rich with harmonics, and modulated with all the variety of a hundred stops, from the great organ at the touch of a master hand. When God chose that way to deliver man, He chose a way that human thought knew how to tread. Nothing is more impressive about the Christian mystery of Atonement than the fact that it is conspicuously hidden from the wise and understanding, and revealed unto babes. The trained thinker, however devout,

wrestles with its intellectual difficulties, and will often remain for years utterly dissatisfied with the multitude of efforts that have been made towards its interpretation. One theory after another he will take up and throw aside—there is so much unreality and make-believe in them all! Yet he knows that the simple savage can take in the great Fact as good news that goes straight to his heart, and never bewilders his mind. And when the thinker himself talks to his little child about the love of Jesus in dying for him, he is not conscious of his difficulties, which belong to theology, not religion—the intellectual interpretation, not the fact to be interpreted. All the time, while his mind is still agnostic, almost prepared to declare that the mystery is guarded in the mind of God, and was never meant to be known by man, he is able to join with reverent thankfulness in the child's hymn :

I am not skilled to understand  
What God hath willed, what God hath planned;  
I only know at His right hand  
Stands one who is my Saviour.

What I have said about the central doctrine of Christianity—central theory, if we are to be precise, for I have shown that it makes no difference—applies to the whole range of religion. Our new science enables us to write a new chapter of the *Praeparatio Evangelica*. We have learnt from physical science the general formula of evolution as describing what we know of the Creator's method in the material world. Research is yearly modifying what science understands by the formula; but



that does not concern us, as the central principle does not change. We have seen this principle of evolution applied successively to other departments of knowledge, and to human institutions. And we naturally ask, Is there to be one exception to the rule, one side of man, and that the most important, cut off from the operation of a divine law? When special creations have mostly disappeared from our history of the material world, are special revelations to remain—except possibly under unique conditions where laws are working which we have no power to fathom? Is it not reasonable to expect that if evolution is a good enough method for God to employ everywhere else, it will be good enough for Him in the crown of all His work? Not by objective, external, authoritative voices, compelling an unintelligent assent, will He speak to those whom He created in His own image. He attains His supreme object when, after age-long processes have developed matter and force, life, consciousness, mind, and will, He has worked upon will in the only way worthy of it. So He lets those instincts work which were evolved under His eye, and they bring a dawning consciousness of the divine. We need not categorically deny that what men call the miraculous has ever entered into the history of revelation. But we are free to believe that the evolutionary mode has been the normal. And we can believe this because we have come to understand evolution in a theistic light. All things have reached their present condition by evolutionary process; but God has been as vitally present throughout that process as He was in the framing of the evolutionary law.

There is something in the recognition of this new light which is very beautifully congruent with the scriptural teaching as to the dignity of man. God deigns to call man His 'friend,' and the essential element of this relation is explained to be that God does not issue mere commands as to a slave, but makes His purpose clear as to a being whom He would set by His side in glory. In that profound chapter where Abraham, 'the friend of God,' pleads with Jehovah for the righteous who may be in Sodom, He invites the patriarch's prayer in the words, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?' And to His disciples on the eve of the Passion Jesus says, 'No more do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. You I have called friends, because I have made known to you all that I heard from My Father.' We were not intended to receive even God's own truth by a mechanical or external revelation. That reason which God's creative power brought into slowly-won perfection was to be the medium through which we were designed to learn of Him who made us for Himself, so that our hearts should be restless until they rest in Him.

## VI

One of the assured results of scientific anthropology is that religion is universal among men. Of course to establish that thesis we must start from a definition of religion. In formulating this we must be careful to avoid the error of those who will not accept anything as religion unless it conforms to the standards

of what we know religion to be. For us it can be nothing less than what is expressed in Professor Harnack's beautiful words,<sup>1</sup> 'Eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God.' But to demand this, or a tithe of it, as the minimum attainment before religion can be recognized at all is as reasonable as to attempt a definition of life, and insist on everything that life means for a man in the fullness of physical and intellectual powers. After all, the amoeba is *alive*! The definition of religion I shall adopt is Professor E. B. Tylor's 'minimum'—'the belief in Spiritual Beings.' Why I cannot consent to include worship will appear presently. That no people has ever yet been observed in which the sense of the supernatural is wholly wanting may be asserted with complete confidence; and it gives us all we need for our task of tracing the upward progress. How did this recognition of the supernatural first arise among men? There have been sundry theories, mostly invented and accepted under the impression that they were a substitute for the doctrine of divine revelation. From what I have already said it will appear that Christians have no *a priori* grounds for rejecting any one of these theories. *The Evolution of the Idea of God* is a title which the writer of the book so named doubtless meant to be a challenge. It need not disturb us in the least. If we speak of the 'evolution of man' we do not imply that man is a chimera; and the idea of evolution itself was after all 'evolved' by a process which has many points of contact with that which is the subject of this chapter. For myself, I am not only prepared

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* p. 8.    <sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 424.

to choose one of the theories: I am not sure that they are mutually exclusive. More than one of them may very well have contributed to the dawning of religious consciousness in one part of the world or another. Dreams are one suggested source. The savage always regards dreams as experiences of reality; and the continued existence of departed ancestors or friends might easily be one of many ideas of the supernatural impressed upon his mind through a dream. Apparitions—whatever be the reality to which they correspond—would be an influence in the same direction. There is also the instinctive effort to explain the energies of Nature. Why does the sun rise and set, the river flow, the rock crash down, the tree sway about in the wind? Surely because they are *alive*, in the same sense that the man is alive who can move as they do. And how does man exercise that power? There comes a time when he 'dies,' when the body that could walk and eat and speak lies still and helpless, for the breath has gone out of it. The breath or 'spirit,' then, makes the difference, and this it is that must account for the movements and energies of the world around. Hence what we call 'animism,' the recognition of a spirit in all material objects, animate or inanimate, by which they go their ways and do their deeds. In this way the world becomes peopled with spirits, a background of vague and generally dreaded possibilities, the dangers arising from which man must avoid and repel as best he may.

These last words suggest our next step. Primitive man has become convinced that the world is full of spirits. How is he to secure what he needs

with uncertain powers around him which may refuse the gift? Will the spirit in the sun give light and heat, that in the cloud give rain, that in the seed consent to sprout and grow and ripen for his food? According to Dr. Frazer's theory, man's first expedient was to control the powers of Nature by operations of magic. By an exercise of child-psychology, it was assumed possible to command these natural forces by imitating them. To bring rain you pour water on the ground, torture a human victim till he weeps copiously, or take the 'green man'—a man enveloped in grasses or boughs, representing the vegetation spirit—and souse him in a brook. To recruit the energies of the sun after midsummer, you kindle 'St. John's fires.' And so on, through a strange gamut of customs which still survive in country-places even in England, their ancient meaning long forgotten, but the practice still preserved 'for luck.'

But the time came when men began to realize that this naïve way of bringing rain—let us keep to this one case for simplicity's sake—did not achieve its purpose. The day was slow in coming. One occasion when by coincidence the charm worked obliterated the memory of twenty failures. And the system had produced a class of experts, rain-makers, who knew the accumulated lore of generations; and these were sadly wanting in the first principles of their science if they could not suggest excellent reasons why the charm had failed. But this could not go on indefinitely. At last the 'despair of magic,' as Professor Frazer puts it, produced a new method. If those powerful spirits that gave or withheld the rain could not be coerced,

perhaps they might be entreated. Magic failed, and by its failure produced religion,

Thus far Professor Frazer. Without stopping for criticism, I am tempted to stretch the theory a little further. What happened when prayer also failed? A primitive people driven into a rainless country, or unable to migrate from a country where rain was failing, tried magic in vain, and then found that the spirits could not be entreated. Should we not expect in such cases a 'despair of religion'? And that in fact is what we practically find in many places. The Australian aborigines, for instance, have in some of their tribes traditions of divine beings whose work lies in the past. They worship them not at all, having found, I suggest, that the worship was vain.

We can hardly frame a satisfactory theory of the development of religion without allowing for the cases of degeneration and decay. We know all too well that if religion is universal among primitive peoples—as it certainly is, except for cases like the Australian just cited, where belief survives, but worship has disappeared—it is very far from universal in civilized lands. The fact is that religion tends to a position of unstable equilibrium as it climbs higher: the purer and more precious it becomes, the more it needs of effort to maintain it. Let us go back to our example. The primitive people we have postulated gave up magic, and then prayer, as they found neither productive of the result they needed. Perhaps they found that they could store the precious rain, and this accelerated their abandonment of the religious method. Such a people would be at the parting of the ways. Prayer, having



failed to bring them rain, might be simply given up. The divine beings then would be remembered, and a mythology preserved, especially to account for the world's creation. But they would be gods after the order of the deities of Epicurus, so vividly portrayed in six wonderful lines of Lucretius.<sup>1</sup>

As when a great ship is launched a silken cord is cut which releases the vessel to glide down the slipways into the water, but the hand that launched controls it no more, even so in many a theory, and more abundantly in practice, the only place for God is 'in the beginning.'<sup>2</sup> But the crisis might result very differently. The practice of prayer had not brought rain, but it had brought other things of greater value. In that way the very failure of religion brought a higher form of it.

I hope that what I have already said may have disarmed some of the very natural prejudice which may exist among Christian people when confronted with theories of the origin of religion appearing to them to leave out the supernatural. That a theory really leaving out the supernatural would make small appeal to me is, I trust, needless to affirm. My own position in this, as in many other applications, is that the 'natural' *is* supernatural, that a logical and thoroughgoing Theism must see God in the normal, and not look for Him only in the abnormal—or what we think to be abnormal. We cannot be afraid of the Reign of

<sup>1</sup> The lines (Lucr. ii. 646 f.) quoted with thrilling effect by Gladstone in the House of Commons, in his speech on the Affirmation Bill (April 26, 1883).

<sup>2</sup> Compare various missionary testimonies from animistic countries in *The Missionary Message*. R. 25.

Law when once we have come to realize that it is *His* Law. And when we are warned off these 'naturalistic' theories of the genesis of religion, we are bound to ask what alternative is offered. Are we to go back on a use of the opening chapters of the Bible which—if only we would recognize the fact—owes more to Milton than to Moses, and declare Faith's demand that God's self-revelation to *primaeval* man should be regarded as differing in no material respect from our Lord's teaching of the Twelve, except in the range of the truths conveyed? Can we not see that such a conception of revelation—quite apart from the anthropomorphism inherent in it—lowers our thought of God? The precious treasure was committed to earthen vessels indeed! Sin broke the fellowship that once existed between God and His children, and Truth was hopelessly lost except in a dwindling minority of the race. Nor was it the fault of these people that they relapsed into darkness. The fathers ate sour grapes, and their children's teeth were set on edge. Is it not a more reverent theory which makes revelation come slowly, like intelligence to a child? The Judge of all the earth will do right towards men who did not and could not know. The All-Father can be trusted to act in love to His offspring who never grew up into a perfect knowledge of Him.

## VII

But I must hasten to deal with another question that will necessarily be asked by those who cannot lightly yield what has seemed to them to stand in



the Bible. What of the religion of Israel, and the uniqueness of the revelation contained therein? Is this to be explained on a 'naturalistic' basis? Well, only in the same sense of the word as we have met before. We can understand the place of Israel in the history of religion most satisfactorily if we compare the place of some other nations in other departments of human life. Whence has the modern world received, directly or mediately, nearly all its intellectual stimulus—its unapproachable models in art, its foundations in science, its inspirations in literature? From Greece of course, and in Greece from Athens first, with other Greek communities very far behind. One little people was dowered with intellectual gifts such as no people in history has ever rivalled or approached, and through that people the modern world has been intellectualized. Whence come our national systems of law? How has the Europe of to-day learnt the secrets of order and government, the power to mould and administer a State? From the political and legal genius of ancient Rome. The voice of Providence gave the decree—

*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento !*

And the struggle of mediaeval Europe with barbarism owed its triumphant issue to the Romans' keeping of that charge. The examples could be extended, but these outstanding ones help us to realize the law by which nations ascend on high only to receive gifts for men. Be it noted also in these examples that while the general level of national capacity must be high, by far the largest part of the nation's characteristic work is done

by the few. The nation must be worthy of its great men, must be able to appreciate, follow, and support them ; while for the very production of a succession of great men a high average quality is necessary in the people as a whole.

We have only to apply this manifest principle of God's providence to the development of religion, and we shall secure an approximately adequate idea of the part Israel played in bringing the highest of all gifts to the world. The genius of Israel was supremely adapted for the place of missionary of religion to mankind. Israel had no primacy of intellect, and still less genius for politics. But the bond between religion and ethics was closer in this than in any other nation. The national conscience was more sensitive, and ready to respond to an unparalleled degree when the appeal of Right was made in the name of God. We are familiar with depreciatory estimates of the children of Israel as they were and as they are to-day. Mr. Houston Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* supplies a notable example. But most of the hard things that are said of the national character in Old and New Testament times are only the shadows cast by a light incomparably brighter than any that shines elsewhere. If the people did incur the guilt of killing the prophets, it is also certain that no other people followed or even tolerated prophets so long, or yielded such instant and general obedience when a solitary man of humble rank came forth and denounced old-established customs or profitable wrong-doing in the name of the nation's God. Their faults were many and grave, but when we begin to compare

them with other nations we have no difficulty in understanding how much better fitted they were for the work to which the call of God and their own character and training marked them, the foundation-laying of the world-religion.

Such was the soil out of which prophecy arose, by far the most wonderful and fruitful growth in all the long history of religion. It is no part of our case to assert that Israel had a monopoly of this great gift. Socrates, Gautama the Buddha, Confucius, Zarathushtra, even Mohammed, though one gives him the name rather less readily, are prophets by every title that the Science of Religion or true Christian insight can recognize; and the 'goodly fellowship' has its members, famous or obscure, in every land and every time. But the prophets of Israel outclass those of all other countries in number and quality alike. Judged solely by their penetration into the most vital truths of religion, Moses, Samuel and Elijah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the authors of *Jonah* and the central section of *Isaiah*, stand higher than any of the great names I mentioned just now. And it must be remembered that many of the greatest of the Gentile prophets stood virtually alone in their own people, while Israel had an almost unbroken succession. Parsism, with a doctrine of God purer than any Gentile faith possessed, might have become a world-religion if only Iran had produced men worthy to follow and extend the work of Zarathushtra. Islam has become a world-religion, because it has had a succession of true prophets, many of them of higher character than the founder himself, though behind him in genius, and to us mostly unknown. The most

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instructive comparisons for our purpose are those with Greece and India. It need not be proved that Socrates was very far from standing alone in his country. Readers of such a book as the late James Adam's *Religious Teachers of Greece* know what a splendid succession there was of men who thought deeply about God, and taught lessons that were permanent additions to the spiritual wealth of mankind.<sup>1</sup> But while many of them were for sheer intellect on a higher plane than almost all the prophets of Israel, it is not hard to see the superiority of the latter in qualities needed for the propagation of a universal religion. True and ideal religion is the training of the human will into obedience to the perfect will of God:

Our wills are ours—to make them Thine.

Both the intellect and the emotions have their part to play in the training of the will, but the former has notoriously a second place: it is a truism that religion is of the heart more than of the head. The Greeks lived in an atmosphere too exclusively

<sup>1</sup> I am tempted to add a reference to a less familiar source for the study of Greek religion, which in its resemblances and its differences is very instructive. A black marble column of the age of Hadrian, found near Lindus, in Rhodes, gives the conditions on which men may enter the temple before which it stood. 'First and foremost, being pure and healthy in hands and mind, and with no consciousness of wrong-doing.' How much the first combination resembles Heb. x. 22! Cleanliness was even in Christian worship a worthy emblem of godliness—what else did baptism originally mean? Then the stone deals with 'the things external,' and names the number of days within which men may enter after divers pollutions. Three successive lines will illustrate the whole: 'After eating cheese one day, after abortion forty days, after family bereavement forty days.' The juxtaposition is like that in Acts xv. 29, of which it is often noted that Jews thought these pollutions equally grave and Gentiles equally trifling.

intellectual. Conduct was never their strongest point—here the Romans in their best age surpassed them far. They were destined to make very important contributions to the development of Christianity, but their time was not yet. And India—land of profoundest thinkers, ascetic devotees, dreamers and mystics without number—why could not India compete with Israel in the supply of prophets who might teach the whole world? Compare India with Greece, and we see at once the masculine logic which saved Greece from sinking in a bottomless ocean of sheer abstraction, powerless to influence for good the conduct of life or stimulate any useful activity. India has always been far more religious than Greece or any Western nation : religion with her has taken up a larger arc of the periphery of life, and she has pursued it with incomparable earnestness. Her time is not yet, but it is coming. Israel was free from philosophy and mere intellectualism on the one side, from dreamy mysticism and profitless asceticism on the other. Beyond every other qualification, Israel, through the prophets, learnt to bring religion into indissoluble union with conduct, of which religion became the supreme inspirer and controller. Greece never learnt this lesson, India still less ; and in this fact alone we can see the main answer to our question. We look at Israel not for prophets or psalmists, but for the fact that ‘ of him was Christ after the flesh.’ The supreme Teacher might have been born in Athens or Benares. How that would have affected His humanity we need not speculate. If we could imagine that there would have been no difference in Him except the substitution of Attic or Sanskrit

for the Galilean Aramaic and colloquial Hellenistic which He spoke, there would still remain the question whether His disciples would have been equal to the task of preaching Him. The success of the Christian propaganda depended on the providential fact that centuries of semi-conscious preparation had made the messengers of the new faith ready, and provided a deeply religious and high-principled people, scattered all over the Roman Empire, waiting to form the nucleus of the Church of their Messiah. In tracing thus the chain of cause and effect which marked out Israel for a position of unique privilege and unique work, we have been following principles wholly scientific. Comparative Religion may exclaim, 'This is evolution,' and we are not minded to dissent. We can still cry, 'This is the finger of God.'

I do not wish to trespass on the province of my namesake and predecessor, and discourse elaborately on 'The Mission of Israel,' which he has so well described in a former Fernley Lecture. I restrict myself to those aspects of it which Comparative Religion can illuminate. And firstly let me venture one more remark on the characteristic institution I have just been discussing. What is the place of prophets in a scientific account of human progress? The comparison of prophets with poets is obvious, and it gives us some true and valuable ideas. A great mass of poetry, even of great poetry, has manifestly no prophetic note in it. But although there is a function for the 'idle singer of an empty day,' as one of the most fascinating of the brotherhood calls himself, and for the poet who only tries to enshrine conceptions of beauty, there



can be no question that in his highest work the poet is a prophet, and speaks a message to men which he's them to nobler ideals. For our purpose it will be more suggestive to seek a less hackneyed comparison. Prophets are in the spiritual sphere what inventors or discoverers are in the material, or in the world of knowledge. Our material civilization has been developed partly by slow improvements, each advancing almost imperceptibly the resources already enjoyed, but more by sudden and mighty strides of inventive genius, which devises some totally new thing. The prehistoric original of the Prometheus myth, who first found how to kindle fire, the latter-day inventors of steam-engine, wireless telegraphy, or antiseptic surgery—all these have advanced civilization's resources *per saltum*. Similarly in the sphere of abstract knowledge, advance is made partly by the plodding industry of a multitude of inquirers, each content to add his tiny contribution, and partly by the daring intuitions of genius, which at a leap will transform the whole outlook in some province of knowledge. What is allowed without question for these discoverers should be allowed at least as easily for discoverers in the spiritual world. It is really irrational to be always hunting for possible external sources whence new ideas might have been borrowed in germ, when the simple explanation is at our hand and supported by abundant evidence—that a spiritual genius reached the new idea by one flight of his own originality. Equally irrational is it to make mountainous difficulties out of the alleged appearance of a great doctrine centuries before its time. If our external witness assigns its discovery to a prophet,

and there is nothing precise to rebut the testimony, it is only scientific to consider without prejudice the claim of that prophet to have been centuries before his time, like Roger Bacon in the history of physical science. Is it not the habit of really great men to be on the hill-top to greet the rising sun?

One conspicuous reason for the success of Israel's training may be found in the absence, till the time was ripe, of any one prophet standing out immeasurably above his fellows. In such cases there is always danger that the people will fail to reach a standard which has been too suddenly lifted beyond their capacity. The degeneration that sets in is then complicated by the tendency to substitute an imaginary figure of the prophet for the reality, and claim his sanction for some of the ideas he most strongly repudiated.<sup>1</sup> Christianity itself was saved from this peril by the immediate appearance of a prophet, himself greater than any of Israel's succession, who was able to establish the interpretation of the Founder's Person and work on a firm basis for future times. The day of degeneration came, but the succession of prophets never failed; and in the Jesus of the Gospels and the exposition of His significance by Paul they had an ideal which only needed to be reinforced by teaching and example to seize the imagination of a new age.

In attributing to the prophets the whole credit as God's instruments for the spiritual education of Israel, I am not forgetting others who were entirely engaged in the service of the national religion. From early times there were priests, who outwardly took the most important part in the maintenance

<sup>1</sup> Many examples of this will be found in Zoroastrianism.

of the religion. But they never contributed anything to their country's spiritual treasure; and it is very significant that in our Lord's day the leaders of the priests were identified with the school which denied all the greatest discoveries of later Judaism, in the name of a dull materialist conservatism. The priest is rarely, if ever, a power for the maintenance or advance of religion, unless of course (as happily often happens) he is a prophet as well. If we compare the prophet to the inventor of the locomotive, we can at best compare the priest to the engine-driver. And all too often, by his characteristic tendency to magnify his office, he unfits himself for useful service in that humbler capacity, as if an engine-driver should take upon himself to adjudge the merits of improved machinery, and refuse to drive an engine of any later type than the 'Rocket.' It is very significant that the New Testament made no provision for the continuance of the priesthood as a separate order.

Much more important than the priests was the order of Scribes, the teachers who came into existence at the Return, and practically created what we know as Judaism. We are in some danger of condemning the class as a whole because of the hypocrisy which Jesus denounces so sternly in its leading members of His own day. When Milton in *Lycidas* 'predicts the ruin of our corrupted clergy,' we do not understand him to mean that there were none but time-servers and place-hunters in the ministry. Jesus Himself told a Scribe that He was 'not far from the Kingdom of God,' and He speaks of Scribes who have been 'made disciples to the Kingdom of Heaven.' We have evidence

from the Talmud that Ezra the Scribe was not without worthy successors. Their habitual leaning on authority marked the fact that they were not prophets, and did not pretend to be. And yet it was during the age of the Scribes that no less an innovation than the doctrine of immortality came in. The Christian Church from the first set its scribes or teachers only after the prophets, and it retains both in its service still.

These, then, were the instruments through whom Israel was so wonderfully trained. The stages in the training have been vividly brought out by Comparative Religion. The Old Testament faithfully preserves for us a host of features which we can recognize as common elements in all early stages of religion. It is a commonplace of our modern exegesis, illuminated as it is by the new science, that the Old Testament is the record of a progressive revelation. Our own sense ought to have taught us as much. We should hold emphatic opinions about a system of mathematical education which presented the differential calculus before the multiplication table; and it was a strange perversion which made the divine Teacher deal thus with the human nature that He made. And all the time our Lord's own words were before us. We knew how He attributed to Moses a temporary legislation which made concessions to the people's unreadiness for something higher, their 'hardness of heart,' as He called it. And still more emphatically we hear Him with royal authority set aside the Mosaic, and pre-Mosaic, *lex talionis* for a loftier law of His own promulgation, and declaring the very Decalogue in need of supplement for those who

would keep God's Law. With such declarations in view, we cannot object to a reading of the history of Israel which traces the Chosen People from the lowest stage, where they differed little enough from the heathen Semites from whom they sprang. What forces isolated them from pollution, stimulated the rise into monotheism, and taught them the ethical holiness of God, we must not ask now ; the answer to all such questions is the object of all works on the religion of Israel.<sup>1</sup> I will only draw one or two conclusions on points of importance. It is suggestive that we find the educative process depend for its most valuable elements upon the very things that are counted vile in secular history. Mr. Norman Angell has been teaching the Great Powers the lesson, unpalatable enough to their pride, that prosperity and security and even financial credit stand highest among the little peoples of Europe, safe from the temptation to waste their treasure on 'patriotic' budgets, and spared the braggadocio of the mailed fist. Of course nations like England and our cousins across the Rhine may maintain some degree of advance in things that really matter, in spite of wicked waste upon luxuries that bear the devil's mark ; but experience is showing that the true glory of a people is destroyed by militarism in all its forms. Israel's history is classical for the believer in peace. It opened in war, of course : war is natural to the barbarian who has only put one foot on the ladder of

<sup>1</sup> An exceedingly adequate outline of the subject may be seen in Professor A. S. Peake's little sixpenny manual (in *Century Bible Handbooks*). See also Mr. W. J. Moulton's *Fernley Lecture*, already mentioned.

progress. But as early as the reign of David prophetic vision began to teach that a king who had 'shed much blood' was thereby disqualified for building a temple to Jehovah, once Himself conceived to be 'a man of war.' The policy of the prophets was many a time directed towards breaking down the very forces that made their country great, as the world counts greatness. Elijah and his successor destroyed the House of Omri, an able and successful dynasty. Jeremiah's long martyrdom was the 'patriots' vengeance on a magnificent pusillanimity. The attitude of the purely secular historian towards all this is typically seen in the following extract from a recent review of Professor R. A. S. Macalister's *Excavation of Gezer*:<sup>1</sup>

One fact that stands out clearly from Professor Macalister's narrative is the extreme disservice which the revolt of the Maccabees rendered to their fellow-countrymen. At that time the Palestinians, both Jews and Samaritans, were being slowly but effectually welded into an important part of the great Syrian Empire, which might have formed an effective barrier for Asia against Roman aggression from the West and the incursion of real barbarians from the East. A longing for a nationality for which they were ill fitted—for in Palestine from the earliest times every man's hand was against his neighbour's—led the Jews to throw off the light and easy yoke of the Greek kings, only to fall into the iron clutch of Rome, and their rebellion, with far more reason, against this, led directly to their eradication from their native soil. The curse which one Pampras, a dispossessed Syrian, as Professor Macalister thinks, condemned to forced labour on the palace of Simon Maccabaeus, scratched on its wall: 'May fire follow up Simon's palace!' seems to have

<sup>1</sup> *Athenaeum*, July 6, 1912.



been prophetic of the ruin which the rising was to bring upon his native country.

Incidentally the 'light and easy yoke' involved the organized effort to suppress Israel's religion! There were many far-sighted but secularist patriots in the Maccabee days who had the same opinion of these conscience-ruled men. If they had had their way, the independence of Syria might or might not have been secured: whether that would have been better for civilization than the extension of the power of Rome we need not inquire. But we should miss from history one of the very few wars that really ennoble it; and for a dubious political advantage Judaism would have lost an inspiration that has enriched the world. After all, the Book of Daniel—even the First Book of Maccabees—were worth the price paid for their writing! The moral of it is that the laws of the spiritual world are very often the inversion of those prevailing in the outward world; and that the former, however invisible to acute observers who only look on the outside of things, are nevertheless far more abiding and influential in the end.

Next I would call attention to a very serious stumbling-block which appears in the history of religion everywhere, and is not absent from that we have been examining. The opponents of religion in all ages have been ready to point out that its records are written in blood and tears. Lucretius closes the poignant lines in which he describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father, with the biting comment,

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*

'Such monstrous wrongs could be prompted by religion!' is indeed a motto that seems to be writ large over the annals of man's groping after God. Nor can we be surprised if honest critics in the market-place or the study find themselves overwhelmed with indignation as they read the cold-blooded cruelties that make up so large a part of primitive cultus, or the history of religious persecution. Principal George Adam Smith, in his classical commentary on *Isaiah*, has a very striking chapter on the three classes of men who suffer violence at their fellows' hands—the criminal, the enemy, and the martyr; and he shows how the last suffers worst of all. *Corruptio optimi pessima*; and as religion is the deepest of all human emotions, so is it capable of stirring elemental hatreds more fearfully than any other power. Perhaps that is all that need be said in defence of religion against the charge that she inspired the nameless horrors for which the 'Holy' Inquisition is likely to remain supremely typical to all time. But something should be said about the other class of cruelties perpetrated in the ordinary course of savage cultus without any hatred, but in the blind belief that suffering and death of human victims may bring blessing to the race. Let me revert to the story of Iphigenia, and set by it, as Tennyson does in the *Dream of Fair Women*, another story, strangely like it, but charged with a moral that perhaps even the passionate indignation of Lucretius would not have missed. What a pitiful tragedy is that of the 'warrior Gileadite,' sacrificing his only child, and with her all his hopes of living again in his offspring and in hers, because he had opened his mouth to



Jehovah and could not go back!<sup>1</sup> But however strongly we may feel the pity of it, we surely must see that there is ethical value here for which the price paid was not too high. The father fulfilling his vow with his very heart's blood, and winning his victory for the deliverance of unkindly countrymen by powerful trust in the national God to whom he has promised a tremendous gift—is he not worthy, rude barbarian though he be, to stand among the heroes of the eleventh chapter of *Hebrews*, who found God intensely real, and made the fruits of that reality a heritage for mankind? But if Jephthah is heroic, what shall we say of his daughter?

When the third moon was rolled into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equalled my desire—  
How glorious a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!

In contrast to the purely passive Iphigenia, the Israelite girl becomes a partner in the vow—she has her share in her father's triumph and her country's deliverance! Has she not given an inspiration to mankind, fruitful in golden deeds?

<sup>1</sup> Professor Eduard Meyer (in his little monograph on *The Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine*, p. 47) incidentally alludes to the story as a solar myth. Few scholars indeed write with greater authority on matters of ancient history, but I confess the conclusion hard to follow. The story as it stands has every mark of verisimilitude, and fits exactly what may be presumed for the religion of Israel in that age and the most barbarous conditions of the age. Mr. A. B. Cook, who agrees with me, recalls a closer classical parallel to the Jephthah story. Idomeneus, king of Crete, vowed in a tempest that he would sacrifice whatever met him first on his return home. He either fulfilled or endeavoured to fulfil the vow, and was expelled by his subjects in consequence.

And when Christian faith comes in and proclaims that Death has no power to cast such lives 'as rubbish to the void,' we can try to imagine what use God can make of a soul so noble in the eternal world she never knew of till her father's act opened the door.

My general answer, then, to the charge that religion has cost mankind unspeakable anguish is that the anguish has proved to be the travail-pains of a higher life. Persecution has produced the noble army of martyrs, the very flower of humanity, and the bringers of the highest gifts that men have ever received. And if primitive religion has always been costly in suffering, it is right to remember that lessons have been taught by it which, on the principles even of those who would altogether cut away morality from religion, were worth learning. There is an unconsciousness about most of these cruel rites of primitive man which, when combined with the obvious sincerity of those who practised them, make us question whether the rites were really brutalizing. It is significant, too, that the victims of some of the most horrible cruelties are volunteers who accept their doom as a privilege. Within strict limits we may even apply the same principle to the bestial immorality which so often accompanies the rites of savage religion. So long as its *naïveté* survives, and men and women practise it with a strong sense of its close connexion with the fertility of Nature, which by sympathetic magic it is believed to assist, we can well believe it would be nothing like so debasing as it would appear to us. But naturally the danger here comes in when its religious motive has faded with the growth of intelligence, but it is still quoted

as an excuse for conduct now known to be degrading. When this time came, as it did for not a few religions, especially in the ancient Nearer East, Religion herself became a Circe who touched men with her wand and turned them into swine.

## VIII

In closing this chapter, I want to bring out by one concrete example the important point that, in estimating contributions to the world's treasure of Truth, it is vital to consider not only the nature of the truth acquired, but also the process by which it has been acquired. It is one of the fundamentals in connexion with the natural history of religion that the search for Truth is even more vital to us than the finding of it. Truth delivered ready-made at our door has no blessing in it ; for this is a prize which only he who seeks can verily find. And when an individual through weary months or years, a people through generations of disappointment and seeming failure, has toiled on without faltering, resolved only to be loyal at all costs to the truth already known, and never under any stress of trial to pretend to believe, or to believe without absolute conviction, then we are assured the seeker will realize sooner or later that an angel presence, even the very object of his quest, has been guiding him all through. And lo ! as he looks back upon his path, the wilderness of his wandering has been glad and blossomed as the rose. This profound and precious experience of mankind will help us to understand how the world not only got the purest

truths from Israel, but got them enriched by the manner in which they had been found.

My example shall be the hope of immortality, no indispensable part of true religion, as the sequel will show, but an enrichment of it so priceless that it is hard indeed for us to conceive the one without the other. It is accordingly almost bewildering to us when we find that until the Old Testament canon was all but complete, the very idea of a future life in any shape was unknown.<sup>1</sup> Pharisees in our Lord's time exercised their utmost ingenuity to find it in the Books of Moses, but Sadducee exegesis held the field with ease. Yet, many centuries earlier, Vedic poets had hailed the dawn as the 'banner of immortality'; and Zarathushtra, the Prophet of Iran, had taught that the man of 'good deeds, words, and thought' should dwell in everlasting peace with the 'Wise Lord' in the 'House of Song.' Saints of Israel could still cry, 'In the grave there is no remembrance of Thee,' when Socrates drank the hemlock, serenely welcoming a blest communion, a fellowship divine beyond death, and with his last breath ordering a sacrifice to the Healer who had stilled for ever the 'fitful fever' of life on earth. How was it that Israel, on the mountain to catch the first dawn of every other truth, lay so long in the valley of the shadow when God was unfolding the sunshine of His 'living hope' for other men?

Now in the achievement of the mighty guess men have travelled very different ways. Nature-religions, like that of the Rigveda, impress their

<sup>1</sup> Some may think this statement too strong, but I cannot see any real opening for a recognition of the idea until a late period.

votaries with the high poetry that is new every morning for those who can read it. For them the daily miracle of the dawn is evidence of the triumph of life.

So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :  
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high.

Simpler and less poetic people meditate on visions of their dead that have appeared to them in sleep, and they infer the continued life of lost friends who have thus come back to them. Others again, like the great Zarathushtra, brood over the wrongs and the inequalities of this world, and their conviction that eternal Justice is on the Throne makes them picture a theodicy beyond the gates of the grave. Israel trod none of these ways. The saints and heroes of faith knew no hereafter but that of the nation, no personal immortality but in the life of their children and children's children. So long as Jehovah blessed His people, the present was rich enough, and good men only asked God to keep His own from Sheol for as lengthy a term as His grace might give. But when the darkness of the Exile fell, and devout worshippers were severed from the beautiful House of God's presence,—when even the Return only opened a new era of servitude, the promises of God rose into a higher sphere. Personal communion with Him became the one supreme good. His lovingkindness became better to them than life ; in His right hand, and nowhere else, were pleasures for evermore. At first this new revelation only

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added fresh terror to that which banished God's faithful servant to Sheol, where none could give Him thanks. But the thought drove faith back on deeper realities in God Himself. 'Take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations.' 'The Eternal God is my refuge,' cried the believing soul; 'the arms are everlasting that embrace me. Surely if I may call such a Being *my* God, He cannot leave the child of His love to Sheol?' So came the great idea into the heart of Israel's saints. It had come to the brain of Gentile thinkers ages before. But this regenerating hope was not destined to win the world by intellectual conviction, and the conquest of the heart in this case was slower but surer than that of the reason. When at last it came, it swept on like a fire to kindle hearts that would never have caught the glow from any source which was not at white heat of conviction.

Now this account of the rise of the doctrine of immortality in Israel coincides exactly, we find, with a great saying of Jesus. Challenged to prove the doctrine of the resurrection—which He significantly identified with that of immortality—from the central Books of Scripture, He laid His unerring finger on the words that told of God's personal relation with the patriarchs. There lay the warrant of faith. It was no accident that Israel recognized first the personal relation to God, and then after long ages drew the inference. The former truth was far the more important. Immortality in itself need not be an ethical doctrine at all. Valhalla, with its jousts and banqueting, the Moslem Paradise with its houris—a mere warrior or a sensualist can



believe in such a future life and be none the better for his creed. Even the lofty Zoroastrian doctrine of a theodicy stops short of the *love* of God. But when a man has learnt the blessedness of communion with infinite Holiness, all life is transfigured, and he can go on his appointed path below with a light from heaven to guide, bringing the perfect world of his hope down to the homes and haunts of men. A hope so won, so kept, is mighty to lift humanity towards the new order where the Will of God reigns. No unpractical dream, no unreal vision, nerves the best energies of those who come by way of Hebrew saintship into the heritage bestowed by Christ. 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.'



## CHAPTER III

### CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS

#### I

LOOKING out over the plain of Elis, where every four years the multitudes assembled for the great Olympian games, there stood for centuries a statue that was the wonder of the world. It was the masterpiece of the Athenian Pheidias, the master-sculptor of all history ; and from all that we hear of it through Greek writers, trained in the instincts of the most artistic nation ever known, we may well believe that Art would thankfully offer for that one statue the whole content of almost any gallery on earth. It was the figure of Olympian Zeus, of which for more than a thousand years the memory has survived only on two coins and in the descriptions of Pausanias and Dio Chrysostom. From these we learn that Pheidias ventured on a new departure in religion as well as in art. Zeus the Thunderer had been depicted in different forms, in which grandeur and awe found full expression. But the conception of the supreme Hellenic deity was to find its final expression in a human figure, majestic indeed beyond compare, but beautiful with a benignity and grace which recalled the Greeks to the profound implications of the Homeric title, 'Father of gods and men.' Till nameless vandals

of the dark ages destroyed the grandest monument ever 'graven by art and device of man,' the Zeus of Pheidias proclaimed to age after age that those who 'sought God, if haply they might grope for Him and find Him' had been guided in their quest, and found something even in marble to which the Deity was in a very real if limited sense 'like' after all.

We have no information that Paul ever passed by Olympia. The Jew within him, nurtured on the Second Commandment, might have seen even there, as in the numberless marble deities of Athens, only so much 'idolatry'; though we should like to think that the Greek in him was strong enough to whisper hints to his Christian tolerance, and prompt a recognition that five centuries before he preached in Athens one sincere soul had learnt something wonderful of God. But the centuries passed, and it proved that the glorious face was not only the climax of a vision that had died away before a brighter light. The Zeus begins to reappear, though with a new name. It is the name of Christ! The traditional type of the Saviour's face, so familiar to us that even a child would seldom be at fault in finding Him in a pictorial group, has been proved to be very old; one enthusiast even made an effort to argue its possible authenticity. I am afraid we cannot allow the wish to believe so much latitude as this would require; and the illustrations in Mr. A. B. Cook's monumental work on *Zeus* will soon enable any reader to judge for himself how strong is the case for the alternative.<sup>1</sup> I pretend

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to no knowledge whatever on art or archaeology, but I gladly accept from an acknowledged expert an affiliation of the *Christusbild* which has profound suggestiveness for the subject of this chapter.

But before I point the moral of this parable I am tempted to add a second from the other side of the old classical world. From Athens I turn to Rome, from the greatest of all artists to one of the half-dozen greatest poets of universal literature. Like Pheidias, Virgil was a deeply religious man, and we have, of course, far more copious evidence of the fact in the poems of one who 'uttered nothing base,' and persuaded even the Middle Ages that he was not far from the Kingdom of God. It may have been only on the ground of the 'Messianic Eclogue' that Virgil figured as half a Christian in the epic of his only peer from Italy; but modern study would endorse and go beyond Dante's estimate of one of the gentlest and purest spirits in literary history. In a striking lecture delivered before the Classical Association when it came to Manchester,<sup>1</sup> my colleague Professor Conway dealt with the apotheosis of Augustus as handled by Virgil. There is something peculiarly nauseous in the flattery of the court poets on these lines—one thinks especially of Horace's familiar verses depicting the Emperor while still on earth sitting at the table of the gods:

*Quos inter Augustus recumbens  
Purpureo bibit ore nectar.*

But in Virgil we are in a very different atmosphere, and here as everywhere the poet is transparently

<sup>1</sup> See the *Proceedings* for October, 1906, pp. 35-37.



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sincere. Men are repelled, Professor Conway noted, because Virgil called Augustus a god. But he did *not* call him a god: he called him *deus*—are we going to allow nothing for the deepening of the idea by the associations of Christianity? Moreover, it is found, as we examine Virgil's treatment of the subject, that he only admits the *motif* of apotheosis when he dwells on the blessings Augustus had brought to his exhausted country, or gratefully acknowledges his bounty to himself:

*O Meliboeë, deus nobis hæc otia fecit,  
Namque erit ille mihi semper deus.*

Augustus, it must be admitted, stood in much need of idealizing. He had waded through slaughter to his throne, even if he behaved wisely and humanely when he reached it. His historical record accordingly is as chequered as the mythological record of Zeus. But both alike, in the hands of truly religious thinkers, can yield the great lesson that 'God is good.' We realize the weak points of the Olympian religion, which by its intense anthropomorphism made it hard for the gods to rise above the level of men, and often left them far below it. Still more we condemn the Roman Caesar-worship, which was, in fact, the one gigantic foe with which Christianity in the first three centuries waged a life-and-death struggle. But now that Zeus has long ago come to a real grave, and Europe is no more in peril of Caesarism—for Russia, though in Europe, is not of it—we can afford to recognize that even from these sources there were thoughts worthy of being 'baptized into Christ.'

This last phrase recurs in the successive chapters

of Professor Percy Gardner's most suggestive book on *The Growth of Christianity*. The capacity of the new religion to absorb all that was best in the systems that were 'waxing old and nigh unto vanishing away' is one of its most obvious minor qualifications for a queenly rank over all the religions of the world. In my last chapter I tried to show how far we may accept efforts to put the syncretism further back. In general, we saw, the mixture of ideas had been relatively small when the apostles took up the inheritance of Israel, transfigured by the touch of the Christ. But when once a sure foundation had been laid—if we may vary the metaphor—stones from widely distant quarries could be brought and fitted to their place in a superstructure which must shelter the whole world. Professor Gunkel is quite justified in his claim (pp. 30 f. above) that a syncretic origin is entirely in keeping with the universal destiny of Christianity, whether we accept or deny the particular instances for which he makes the claim. And I must press here the principle that underlies the present discussion, lest any reader should think I am spending an undue proportion of space on ancient history in a book primarily concerned with modern missions. I have to ask in this chapter what is the attitude of Christianity to other religions, and it is vital to my answer if it turns out that in its earliest history it drew material of value from religions which yielded it unconsciously all that was best in them, and then perished before its advance. It may well be that history will repeat itself, and Wise Men from the East once more bring gold and frankincense and myrrh to the Christ, new-born to be their King.



II

But before we take the final leap into the conditions of the twentieth century, we must stop for one more discussion upon past history. We have seen that alien ideas have been 'baptized into Christ' and become a not unworthy part of our Christian inheritance. Have the candidates for this baptism always been worthy, and has the baptism always involved the regeneration without which such neophytes can never be truly at home in the Church? We recall Professor E. B. Tylor's weighty words<sup>1</sup>:

The thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence.

I have endeavoured to trace one or two of the most important of these clues, and have drawn an induction as to the harmony between central Christian doctrine and the basic elements of human nature. But is it only pure and necessary thoughts and principles that are attached to these clues?

The fact is notorious that in its long history the Church has not been always careful as to the character of her members on trial, whether individuals or ideas. She has baptized new converts in droves, and asked only perfunctory questions. And in her eagerness to win men to membership she has practised accommodation on a very large scale indeed. Now one of the most urgent problems of our modern missionary policy is that of the limits of accommodation. How far may long-established

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 421.

customs or beliefs be let alone when suited with an adequate Christian interpretation? The study of history, in the new light of Comparative Religion, will be a good preparation for framing our reply.

An excellent example of safe and harmless accommodation may be seen in Pentateuchal legislation.<sup>1</sup> A field of corn is not to be reaped to the very last sheaf; a corner is to be left for the poor and helpless to glean. But this assigned purpose is later by millennia than the practice itself, which may be traced all over the world, in harvest customs that have but lately died out even in our own country. The mass of material in *The Golden Bough*<sup>2</sup> shows clearly enough that the custom originally concerned the Corn-spirit, who fled before the reapers and made his last stand in the uncut corner. The custom was far too deep-seated to be dislodged, and it was only the intention of it which was foreign to the higher religion. This indeed, we should suspect, was already almost forgotten in the days of the settlement in Palestine; the harvesters may well have observed it vaguely 'for luck,' as our own country folk used to do. The legislation then supplied the humanitarian motive, good in itself, and quite enough to cover the old practice completely; and everything went on as before. Modern and mediæval Christianity alike are full of adaptations. Our time of observing Christmas is an excellent example. The Mithraists kept just after the winter solstice 'the birthday of the Unconquered Sun.' It was a stroke of genius when the Christians, who had no

<sup>1</sup> See Lev. xix. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> See Part V. (third edition), *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, esp. ch. v. of the first volume.

possible knowledge as to the real day of the birth of Jesus, laid claim to the great holiday and kept thereon the birthday of the 'Sun of Righteousness.' A later season in the Christian year may serve to illustrate a less clear case for accommodation. The period of abstinence in early spring, called 'Lent' in heathen days, was connected with the ideas of sympathetic magic, and aimed at giving strength to the crops just springing up. There are still celebrations in out-of-the-way regions in which the old heathen Lent is more apparent than its Christian adaptation. The Church took Lent over, made it vaguely commemorate at once the temptation at the outset and the passion at the close of our Lord's ministry, and bade men keep a period of abstinence in repentance and holy meditation. Here clearly is an institution which is in no way obligatory. We who prefer to neglect it need not however repudiate it because of its heathen origin. It is none the worse for that, if observed for instance as it is by multitudes of pious Anglicans. The only question that needs to be asked is whether the individual finds it profitable. If he does, that is reason enough for keeping it. If he does not, he is free to spread his holy seasons over other parts of the year.

But there are notable cases of accommodation, of which the Church of Rome has a large number, in which we cannot doubt that the results have been wholly bad. Polytheism was banished in name rather than in fact from the popular creed when the attributes of the old gods were transferred to Christian saints. The authoritative theologians of the Church might guard their formulae from peril,

though when prayer to these saints was permitted it is hard to see in what real sense monotheism was retained. Among the masses of the people there has been little effort to guard the principle. Mr. J. C. Lawson's interesting work on religious beliefs in modern Greece<sup>1</sup> shows that the 'Orthodox' Church has been as unsuccessful as the 'Catholic' in preserving the very creed that God is One. Christ has been robbed of His most precious attributes to furnish forth material for a goddess who is the lineal descendant of those of the old paganism. There is one strain in the 'Blessed Virgin's' ancestry which illustrates strikingly the point made by Professor Tylor in the sentence recently quoted (p. 85). The Greeks had a well-known cult of Demeter and Persephone, the Corn-goddess and her daughter, whose stealing away by 'gloomy Dis' in the plains of Enna is told by Milton in familiar lines.<sup>2</sup> They generally, however, substituted the simple word 'Maid' (*Kore*) for Persephone's name, and they would probably have substituted 'Mother' for Demeter's, had not popular etymology convinced them that the word was there already. Now the cult of the Mother and Child, the spirit of the ripe harvest and that of next year's sowing, was in existence ages before Greek religion; and it is in existence still, in most parts of the world.<sup>3</sup> The accommodation which kept the old figure, and by identifying it with the infant Saviour in His mother's

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Camb. Univ. Press).

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, iv. 268 ff.

<sup>3</sup> In modern Greece 'Saint Demetra' duly keeps up the hoary succession (Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 80).

arms brought it to be the emblem of the heavenly blessing on the divinest thing in human life, is beautiful and harmless enough. Nor should I be disposed to descend to the level of an intolerance unworthy of Protestantism, and declare that other features of Mariolatry are and have been irredeemably bad. In the dark ages the conception of a Man who combined the highest virtues of man and woman, strength and tenderness indissolubly blended, was naturally beyond the range of popular understanding. For their 'hardness of heart' Providence allowed that a grace peculiarly needed in evil and cruel times should come to them by an inherited religious idea which represented the highest men were then capable of taking in. It was better they should learn that way than not at all; and the apotheosis of Christ's mother at any rate brought them one step nearer to the Lord Himself. But however glad we may be to recognize all we can of good in the effects of this apotheosis, we cannot overlook the result in the arrest of the upward progress of religion. 'Catholic' countries are like children that cannot grow up. There are the child's virtues, including a devoutness which Protestants might envy, and a faith which can believe everything. But the heart of the child with the intelligence of the man is needed to accomplish religion's perfect work; and we cannot wonder that arrested development has produced an almost universal revolt of the brain in countries where Protestantism has had no chance. The whole process has carried with it a lowering of the sense of truth. Multitudes of the saints are mythical to the last detail of their story. The history of the word 'legend' is eloquent

here. The edifying life of a saint, 'appointed to be read' from the pulpit in the monastery dining-hall, had a general character which stamped itself indelibly on the word appropriated for this true descendant of the classical 'myth.' The net result of the experience of Christendom does not encourage anything beyond a most cautious use of accommodation.

### III

We turn to the question of modern non-Christian religions, their strong and weak points, and their relation to the missionary message. In this part of my subject, I need not say, the ground has been occupied already, and in the most authoritative way. The Report of Commission IV. of the Edinburgh Conference, embodying the experience of a host of missionaries as studied by men exceptionally qualified for their task, makes it sheer presumption for any one man to trespass on the theme, especially without access to that unique collection of first-hand evidence upon which Professor Cairns and his colleagues based their masterly survey.<sup>1</sup> I might have tried to add a section on the Parsi religion, concerning which no discussion was admitted at Edinburgh, the time being preoccupied with religions hardly any of which could number less than a hundred adherents for every one Parsi. The fact, however, remains that Parsism is by far the purest

<sup>1</sup> I cannot resist temptation to express my very strong wish that the Continuation Committee could devise means for publishing this evidence, or at least a very large selection from it. It is obvious from the Report that it would make a volume of immense value.



of non-Christian religions, and the Parsis are exceptionally worth winning. But anything I could say upon this tempting subject would be only a very brief summary of results arrived at in a volume on this sole topic, considerably larger than the present lecture. In my reflections on this central theme I shall take the Edinburgh classic for granted, keeping at the back of my mind, in addition, such work as that of Professor J. G. Frazer on primitive religions, together with some investigations in the special field just named.

The study of this Report powerfully impresses me with the tolerance, the modernity, and the open-mindedness of the missionaries whose experience is concentrated here. We, in our armchairs at home, need not indite any lectures to our brethren on the supreme importance of sympathy and knowledge of the religions of the people they evangelize. They can preach better sermons than we on the pregnant saying of the Master, 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' In past days there was not a little of sheer iconoclasm in the spirit with which men went forth to drag men out of their systems of unredeemed darkness and error. It was not worth while to toil towards an understanding of these heathen systems: the missionary's duty was to destroy them, root and branch, as works of the devil. All this has passed away. In every part of the field the most typical missionaries are seen to be bending their whole force of brain and heart to the great task of acquiring a sympathetic understanding of their people's thoughts. They are busy with the heaps on their threshing floor, not to estimate with scorn the mass of chaff good for nothing but the fire, but to pick

out scattered grains of seed-corn that may grow in their Master's field. Even those who labour among the lowest Animists are no exception to the rule. The majority are reported as holding that God has not left Himself without witness in these peoples, and that the missionary must look for the element of good, extend it and build upon it. A striking example is quoted (p. 22) from a missionary of our own in West Africa, the Rev. W. T. Balmer :

The most powerful and effective sermon I ever heard preached to a dark degraded company of pagans in the Interior was based upon their idea of sacrifice in fetish worship.

I must, in general, resist temptation to quote from a book which every serious student of Missions knows so well. But the complementary extract from the opposite extreme of the field will drive home the lesson of the whole. An American missionary in Japan, Dr. S. L. Gulick, writes thus (p. 95) :

The Christian preacher should constantly take the ground that every good teaching in the native faith is a gift of God, the Father of all men, and is a preparation for the coming of His fuller revelation in Jesus Christ. We should show our real and deep respect for the 'heathen' religions: we should take off our hats at their shrines, as we expect them to do in our churches. We should ever insist that Christianity does not come to destroy anything that is good or true in the native faiths, but rather to stimulate, to strengthen, and fulfil it—to give it life and real energy. The trouble with the native religions is not that they possess no truth, but that the truth they have is so mixed up with folly and superstition that it is lost; it has no power—no life-giving energy.



This sympathetic attitude, which, after all, is only the attitude of Paul himself at Lystra and at Athens—fields nearly as different as Sierra Leone and Japan—is clearly that of the missionary body as a whole; we may fairly estimate the general temper from that of the representative men and women who speak through this Report. It does not mean that missionaries are blind to the darker side. I have quoted one of the workers whom the W. M. M. S. is proud to own; I should like to quote another by whom we are equally glad to have been represented at Edinburgh. An impressive letter from the Rev. C. H. Monahan is quoted at length in the Commission's postscript (p. 277), in which fear is expressed lest the ugly aspects of Hinduism should be forgotten in the endeavour to bring out its better features. Mr. Monahan shows himself entirely with the Commission in their recognition of what is good, and they wholly endorse his warning against a possible misinterpretation of Christian tolerance. The warning is strikingly echoed in some comments I have lately received from the Rev. William Goudie, whose right to speak about Indian religion is pre-eminent. He is very much afraid lest the new attitude should be supposed to involve too high an estimate of the elements of truth to be found in non-Christian systems, which we may often read into them by mistaken explanation of acts only outwardly capable of the higher meaning. But Mr. Goudie comes to the same conclusion as the others :

Christianity conquers through its difference from, and not through its approximations to, all other forms of faith. Its first grip on the mind and heart

of a new convert is almost invariably through some point of contrast, and its first impact on his own faith is nearly always destructive. The first effect of Christianity on the Hindu systems must be to disintegrate. The constructive and inclusive process will come later; the experienced Christian will look back and see that though the sun has risen in him but lately the stars of God have shone all through the long night; he will be ready to cry 'Lo God was with me all the time, and I knew it not'; it is only in the light of the Christian faith that the fragments of truth in other systems can be discovered, valued, and placed in the final system.

If I may venture my own echo of this new voice with which the ambassadors of Christ are speaking to-day, I might repeat some words addressed to a meeting of Parsis in London—I am loth that the purest and best of the non-Christian faiths should be left out of a survey of God's witness to Himself among the Gentiles:

As I sum up in these few words Zarathushtra's ideals, I reflect with satisfaction that the prayer, 'Let the good kingdom come,' will go equally well into your sacred language and into mine—into the words of the Gâthâs<sup>1</sup> and those of the Lord's Prayer. You will, I am sure, understand and allow my wish this afternoon to plead for two great religions and not one only, nor will you expect me to bate what I, of course, consider the higher claims of my own faith. But I want to emphasize my feeling that a Christian student of Parsism must always carry at the back of his mind his Master's words, 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' Were I to venture to preach to Parsis, I should urge them to be better Parsis—to learn more

<sup>1</sup>The Hymns of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), the oldest and most valuable part of the Avesta. They are translated in my *Hibbert Lectures*.

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and more of the essence of their great Prophet's teaching, and believe more fervently and put into action more continually the doctrine of God and man which he set forth nearly three thousand years ago. I cannot think of a single doctrine that has any claim to originate from Zarathushtra, which I should press a Parsi congregation to abandon. I only want to add to the teaching what seems to me wholly consistent with its highest thoughts. I recall the smallness of your community, and your refusal to admit proselytes, much less to seek them; and I venture to ask whether you are doing your part for the *Frashokereti*, the 'regeneration' not of India only but of the world, to which your Prophet bade you look forward. History leads us to expect great things from a people so enlightened and public-spirited as yours. But am I not right in declaring that a merely material and external regeneration has no seeds of permanence in it, and that religion must come in to give it soul? If that be so, may we not remind one another this afternoon that Zarathushtra expected his work to be completed by other *Saoshyants*, 'Saviours,' under whom at last

Hell itself shall pass away,

And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day!

And we say that the *Saoshyant* has come, and you were the first to greet Him. Your own Wise Men recognized His *fravashi*<sup>1</sup> in the sky, and came to worship Him, first of all the Gentile world. Am I suggesting to you an apostasy—am I urging you to become worse Parsis or better, when I plead that you should recognize the Prophet of Nazareth now as you did then, and help Him to destroy the works of Ahriman in preparation for that final renovation of the Wise Lord's<sup>2</sup> world? We claim that no one

<sup>1</sup> The spiritual counterpart of a man, dwelling in heaven, and in some forms of Magian religion apparently associated with the stars. See my *Hibbert Lectures*, ch. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Ormazd (*Ahura Mazda*) means 'Wise Lord,' the divine antagonist and ultimate conqueror of Ahriman (*Angra Mainyu*), the 'Enemy Spirit.'

nation can ever fully interpret our Christ, or grasp fully the religion which will one day dominate the world. We look for the help of the Brahman and the Moslem, the Buddhist and the Confucian, to bring their several treasures to the feet of the coming Lord of men. And when the dream is realized, surely no gold will shine so richly, no frankincense smell so sweet, as that which shall be brought into His presence by those who follow the saintly Sage of Iran and the heroic Pilgrim Fathers who brought his sacred fire from Persia to Bombay.

Side by side with all this frank and cordial recognition of the good in other religions, we note in the missionaries' testimony an assurance as emphatic as ever that Christianity is *the* religion. There is no hint that men who really know the non-Christian systems at close quarters ever find their own faith supplemented or corrected by contrasts where Christianity has to take a second place. Many of the witnesses admit, in answering the question whether their experience has 'altered in form or substance' their 'impression as to what constitute the most important and vital elements in the Christian gospel,' that their minds have undergone a change. But it is always in one direction. First things have leapt to first place. Experience has driven them, as it drove the greatest of all missionaries, to throw the whole emphasis on the central truth. I return to this in the concluding chapter, but I must anticipate so much here. The study of Comparative Religion, whether in the laboratory with the student at home, or in the field with the foreign missionary, will do nothing to disturb the primacy of 'Jesus and the Resurrection' among all the truths that have come to

men. Each religion in turn is found to have glimpses of truth, some few enough, others more or less abundant; but none of them has anything of value which cannot be traced in the New Testament. Practical contact with other religions may sometimes indeed shake doctrines on which the Church has set her seal at one time or another; but when the Christian goes back to his authentic documents he finds they are not there. Not seldom, of course, we meet with claims on the part of the higher religions that their tenets are superior to the antagonistic doctrines of the preachers of the gospel. But the superiority is never one which would be admitted by any jury of impartial outsiders, or sustained by an argument that would appeal to the world at large.

The modern missionary, then, goes forth on an essentially constructive errand. He has his destructive work to do. His people are in bondage to the fear of malignant spirits: he has to break their chains. They associate with religion practices of cruelty and lust: he has to find a way to their conscience, that they may forswear such religion. But in doing this he never fails to use the 'expulsive power of a new affection.' The attractive power of Jesus does more to dissipate evil than the most effective denunciation. The life of the missionary and the purity and kindliness of his home are a form of argument more telling by far than any logic he has at command. In his sermons and private conversations with the people he is always searching for something they understand already, however dimly, and out of the little good to bring the best of all. This transformation of the missionary motive



is not an object lying before us, visible to the far-seeing, and slowly finding its way, to the duller minds. It is an accomplished fact without which indeed the Edinburgh Conference could not have met at all. Of course, the missionaries whose communications form the material of the Report are outstanding men and women, the choicest brains in the service of all the Missionary Societies. But I think those of us who know the more ordinary missionary in considerable numbers will agree that their representatives here have not untruly painted the ideals and practice of those whom they lead. We need not speak of the present as a transition period, unless we are thinking of the home base of Missions. There, indeed, there is lagging. The old motive, founded largely on the thought of hell, has admittedly lost all its effectiveness; and with a majority, one fears, even of church members, there is nothing adequate to fill its place. It will come, with every other spiritual blessing, when at last the longed-for revival fills the home churches with new life. But on the mission-field our brethren know perfectly well what they have gone to do. They have rediscovered the motive of Paul, who went to discharge a mighty debt that he owed to all men. Christ had infinitely enriched his own life, and he must pass on to others the unsearchable riches that belonged to them as much as to him. They were not absolute paupers; some portion of their inheritance had come to them. But woe was to himself, Paul knew, if he kept back the heavenly treasure that was due to his brethren in every land.

Among the many thought-provoking notes on the

evidence, contained in the brief but profoundly important review that gathers up and enforces the summary, I may call attention first to those which point us to modern Missions as a commentary on the New Testament and the early history of Christianity. The first impact of the Faith upon communities of men is antecedently likely to be attended by very similar phenomena in all ages, since the unity in diversity of human nature is being worked upon by the same new force. The task of our missionaries confronted with Indian thought has many resemblances to that of Paul in the midst of Hellenism. The colossus of Caesar-worship which bestrode the path of early Christianity has risen again to dispute the advance of the Faith in Japan. The antithetic attitudes which missionaries have taken towards the religions of the peoples reproduce those of two early schools—that of Tertullian, who could see nothing but the devil's work in paganism, and that of the great Origen, who loved to recognize on every hand the signs of the preparation of the gospel. Our biblical commentaries might jettison some venerable lumber to find room for riches gathered from the experience of mission work to-day. Each several field of non-Christian religion can supply much-needed correctives of our popular Christian doctrine. The missionary takes with him the crude Western setting of New Testament truths, and is soon forced to reconsider his theology. He finds the doctrine of the Trinity a grievous stumbling-block to the Moslem. He tries to explain it, and realizes that the doctrine elaborately worked out by Greek theologians, so as to express monotheism in

its most absolute form, has been developed into practical tritheism in the religious language of a race unaccustomed to fine distinctions and minutely exact statement. No wonder if he demands as an imperative necessity a restatement of Trinitarian doctrine, which shall emphasize the Unity of God and define the meaning of 'Son' as applied to Christ, so that we may in coming back to the New Testament escape a reproach cast at us by the thoughtful Moslem.

We may set beside this a complementary reaction between Islam and Christianity, which becomes relevant at this point because it affects the doctrine of the Trinity. A recent remarkable article<sup>1</sup> by a Moslem convert of intellectual distinction dwells on 'the light shed by Islam on Christianity.' He shows how 'the life and history of Islam afford the strongest psychological argument and the mightiest historical proof of the inmost irrepressible yearning of the human heart after Christ.' For the very religion whose *raison d'être* was the protest against 'the deification of Christ or any man whatsoever' has been driven in self-preservation 'to yield to a strong current of anti-Islamic pro-Christian tendency to seek for a divine-human mediator.' Mohammed becomes the God-man—just as Gautama in present-day Buddhism. (The Unitarian interpretation of this fact is, of course, very obvious; but it fails to explain a tendency which by its radical establishment in human nature urges its claim to be the inevitable course of God's self-revelation.) The writer goes on to cite a most remarkable page

<sup>1</sup> *International Review of Missions*, January, 1913. I quote from pp. 115 f.



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from a learned Indian Mohammedan, which openly claims the doctrine of the Trinity 'as something common between the two forms of religion.' This Moslem thinker accuses Christians of 'a blasphemous interpretation of the doctrine by regarding the personality of God as split up into three distinct personalities.' He admits that

This splendid doctrine has not been well understood by the majority of Islamic and even Christian thinkers. The doctrine is but another way of stating the truth that the absolute unity must have in itself a principle of difference in order to evolve diversity out of itself. Almost all the attacks of Mohammedan theologians are directed against vulgar beliefs, while the truth of real Christianity has not sufficiently been recognized. . . . Sheikh Muhaiyu 'd Din Ibn i 'Arabi says that the error of Christianity does not lie in making Christ God, but that it lies in making God Christ.

Passing on from the tempting subject just described, we may apply the same inquiry to another great non-Christian religion. The Christian teacher goes to the Parsi,<sup>1</sup> and if prepared by knowledge of the Parsi's oldest scriptures can lead some way towards Christ by leading back to his own prophet Zarathushtra. He finds the problem of evil seriously faced, and solved on lines which only popular misunderstanding removes very far from those of the

<sup>1</sup> Which alas! he practically does not do at all: the excellent work done by the University Women's Settlement in Bombay among Parsi women is about the only systematic attempt to influence a community which if weighed and not counted would be high among our missionary ambitions. It is to me rather hard to understand fully why the Parsis are ignored in the Report, and no mention of them admitted at the Conference. For the expansion of the hints given above I may refer to my *Hibbert Lectures*, ch. ix.

New Testament. Christian theology has not a little to learn on this subject by careful comparison with the thoughts of a profound religious genius, living, perhaps, nearly a millennium before the coming of Christ. On the combination of monotheism with the idea of a plurality of hypostases within the Godhead, and on the postulates of ethical immortality, Zarathushtra's teaching is full of suggestiveness. But not even here, where Gentile thought is purest and highest, do we find anything in which the New Testament can be supplemented: we have helpful unconscious commentary, but nothing that tempts us to correct what we read in our own Scriptures. In our study of Church history we find in Parsism what is equally instructive. In both systems we see a doctrine of primitive monotheistic purity invaded by saint and angel worship, prayer replaced by spells, Scriptures recited in a dead language, priests usurping control of a worship which in its first beginnings was free. It throws valuable light on the tendencies which everywhere exist to drag religion down.

Hinduism is treated so fully and acutely in this Report, on a mass of evidence supplied by exceptionally numerous and able witnesses, that I shall not make any selections for fear of spoiling a chapter that should be carefully studied entire. What impresses me more, perhaps, than any contacts of thought is the lesson of the intense earnestness of the Indian quest for God. In 'The Miracle of Purun Das' (*Second Jungle Book*), Mr. Kipling paints with obvious truth an inspiring picture of renunciation in the search for purity, peace, and God. Many of us have heard Dr. Henry Haigh's

moving story of the faqir who had held his arm high above his head for years till the stiffened muscles refused to let it down. In words reminding us of Cranmer at the stake, he told the missionary that he had sinned with that hand, and this was his effort to win redemption. We need not equate the metaphysical Hindu idea of sin with the ethical idea central in Christian doctrine ; nor can we overlook the fact that the object before the Indian ascetic does not transcend the limits of his own soul. We can recognize the limitations and yet feel strongly the spiritual capacity, the power of will and self-discipline which can accomplish these prodigies of renunciation. Surely a country which can produce such power of sacrifice has much to teach the shallow conviction and easy self-forgiveness of the West, whatever we may say about the low religious value of Hinduism itself, or the fruits of it in social life. One point I would notice out of the evidence described in the Report, which does not figure in the concluding chapter. It is very curious to observe, in a phase of thought prominent among the fashions of our most modern modernisms, an approximation to the normal Hindu attitude towards Christianity as an historical religion. For the Hindu, we are told, history has no cogency. 'History belongs to the realm of the unreal and illusory.' 'The only reality to the Indian mind is spiritual life ; facts are but casual phenomena. A thought is of more value than a fact, an illustration as valid as an argument' (p. 167). Strange that the objective, materialist West should betray inclinations towards this characteristically Indian posture of thought !

We have 'new theologians' writing in the *Hibbert Journal* to urge that the truths of Christianity—or such as remain of them—are really independent of the historical existence of Jesus. To pass from clever trifling to a far higher intellectual and spiritual level, I may instance a conversation I once had with a great scholar who had criticized with ruthlessly negative results the documentary evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. He told me he had done it because of his conviction that we needed to be driven from depending on mere history to a dependence on experience as the ultimate criterion. We Methodists are not likely to under-value the appeal to experience; but to make it the substitute for history instead of its guarantee is the exaggeration of a supremely important truth.<sup>1</sup> But the exaggeration, whether in Indian or in European thought, may help us to bring the Western mind round to consider what is after all the most compelling of the Evidences of Christianity.

The most important of all the non-Christian religions, Buddhism, is only treated incidentally in this Report. The evidence that reached the Commission was for some reason very scanty, as far as Southern Buddhism is concerned, and they preferred to leave the subject untouched rather than produce a judgement based on insufficient evidence. So we have it only as it appears in China, with an appendix summarizing four papers sent in from missionaries to Buddhists in Burma, Siam, and Ceylon. A treatment of the classical Buddhism parallel with

<sup>1</sup> On this subject I may refer to an excellent address by my colleague Professor Peake, at the united Methodist Assembly in 1909. See also the discussion of it in Mr. Jackson's *Fernley Lecture* (1912), pp. 159 ff.

that of Vedântism would have been of immense value, and if the Continuation Committee could arrange for a supplementary volume from the same gifted hand, based on adequate evidence gathered under less hurried conditions, it would be a great service. Meanwhile I will pursue my avowedly desultory treatment by way of reminder that Buddhism also has its *præparatio evangelica*, and its lessons for us to use in practical study.

It is needless to labour the point that the best side of Buddhism contains elements of high religious value. The more we strip off accretions and get back to the Founder's figure, adorned the most when freed from an idealizing treatment that only spoils its subject, the higher do we place a Prophet who sorrowed in absolute unselfishness for the sorrows of men, and gave himself and all his powers to the working of their deliverance. His moral code, if obeyed according to his own example, would elevate any people. Alas! there is 'great virtue in an *if*'! For all experience shows that it is relatively easy to frame an exalted code of ethics, and one which can be followed by a small body of men under the powerful impulse of a new enthusiasm. The impossibility is that of prolonging the impulse, and communicating it to large communities. No unaided human will has ever accomplished that. And the Buddha left out God. It is tragic to think that the founders of both the non-Christian world-religions, the only serious rivals to our Faith to-day, owed the fatal defects of their systems to the degeneracy of the witness to God around them. Mohammed knew Christianity only

from an utterly corrupt superstition, which left the New Testament so much out of account that he was never prompted to read it. And for the Buddha the idea of God as he found it was devoid of moral value, and could make no appeal. He lived among the descendants of men who first chanted the Rigveda hymns to Varuṇa, cousins of those who reached a still higher ethical level in the Avestan hymn to Mithra—to say nothing of the incomparable Zarathushtra, with his pure monotheistic Deity. The religious environment of the Buddha was not unlike what that of Socrates would have been in the absence of poets and philosophers who preceded him in his quiet rejection of immoral ideas connected with the Divine. But however intelligible, the ignoring of God deprived Buddhism of moral dynamic. Later generations tried to fill the great gulf by a virtual apotheosis of the Buddha himself—a proceeding based on what we have seen to be a primal instinct of humanity, everywhere led towards the idea of God through the best it can see in man. It is interesting to note that the instinct was exaggerated in Christianity and Buddhism along parallel lines, the Buddha's human existence being declared illusory, just as that of Jesus was by the Docetists of old. Other forms of ancient Gnosticism find a parallel in the theosophy which has fastened on Buddhism in modern times, and produced a curious syncretism that endeavours to make an appeal to thinkers in the West. A more profitable sectarian development of Buddhism is that which in Japanese Amidaism, and in the Southern Buddhist doctrine of the Buddha Maitreya (Mittrya), leads men to the thought of a being who



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is 'the incarnation of Love as Gautama was of Wisdom' (p. 285). There is an interesting suggestion (p. 98) that the Amida doctrine may have originated in Gnostic Christianity.

### IV

Very full of suggestion is the thought which Professor Cairns himself urges in his address to the Conference on presenting the Report. For him the moral of the whole study is that the Church must set herself to search for the 'reserves of spiritual force' which remain unappropriated in her own revelation. All analogy of religious history enforces his appeal. It is obvious that life depends on progress; and if Christianity has no new discoveries in prospect, atrophy must follow. Those who place their Golden Age in the idealized past, and are always sighing for the great days of Wesley, or the Reformation, or the Early Church, mean well, but do not realize what their prayer for an 'old-fashioned' revival implies. The God from whom our next great season of spiritual springtide must descend will assuredly not be content to repeat Himself. He has no duplicates to give. His mercies are 'new every morning,' and 'He that sitteth on the Throne saith, Behold I am making all things new.' Every fresh outburst of spiritual life in history has been due to a discovery. Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther, George Fox, John Wesley, John Henry Newman, David Livingstone, William Booth—all these men of spiritual genius were truly discoverers, who added something to the wealth of Christianity as it

was in their time. Their discoveries were extraordinarily different, and of unequal value, but they were all truly new. Everything permanent in all of them was in the gospel already, and it may well seem strange to us that no one saw these truths before. But the greatest facts in the spiritual world are not discovered like new planets or new chemicals, swimming into the ken of the fortunate explorer as something on which no human eye ever rested before. They are very often known ages before the day of their 'discovery.' They have been on the lips of men as sacred formulae for generations. Preachers have discoursed about them, theologians have argued over them, ordinary hearers have found them very beautiful. And then a Prophet has come, and discovered that the words *meant something* !

It may be worth while to pursue this line a little further, for it has extremely important consequences closely connected with the subject of our inquiry. One of many strange things that drastic criticism has found out about Jesus is that He was not original. The Lord's Prayer is only a cento from voluminous Jewish liturgies. Hillel and the Book of Tobit anticipated the Golden Rule. (Incidentally it may be observed that here, as in numerous Gentile enunciations of it, the form is *negative*, which our critics seem to think makes no difference !) And so forth. The theory in not a few cases requires us to assume that there was a public free library in Nazareth or Capernaum, containing a complete set of Sacred Books of the East, translated into Aramaic or Greek. In this way, no doubt, the young Carpenter contrived to appropriate



gems of wisdom from all the ages—including, by the way, many from sages not yet born. But let that pass. It would make extremely little difference to us if Jesus could be proved to have borrowed all His public sayings. He 'made them current coin'—extracted them (*ex hypothesi*!) from a wonderful commonplace-book in which were duly written up all that was worth preservation in an immense range of religious literature, and brought them down into the market-place for daily use among plain unlettered men. If any one is 'scientific' enough to insist on this view of the matter, I shall not quarrel with him. For even thus Jesus would remain the most stupendously original of all the world's teachers of religion.

Let us take one specific example, the short and simple sentence which in the Epistle of James is called the 'Imperial Law,' forming the whole code for the regulation of human relations in the Kingdom of God. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is a precept as old as Leviticus. Nor did it lie there unrecognized among the old-world ceremonial ordinances in which it is embedded. The Jews in our Lord's time had recognized its primary importance, and put it next the First Commandment of the Law. For this they deserve no little credit, considering the incidental nature of its first appearance. Their only difficulty was in defining the 'neighbour' to whom so heavy a debt was due. For all this we feel that the warm-hearted clerical questioner in the vivid narrative of Mark xii. 28-34 found something perfectly new in the Master's answer. He came to get a matter of speculation settled; he received

a rule of life, which fastened itself in his conscience like an arrow, sped to the mark by the overwhelming personal force of the Prophet who read his very soul. As thus declared by Jesus, and exemplified in the lives of a multitude of His first disciples, who were imitating His spirit rather than merely obeying His word, the old Levitical prescription broke on the world with a novelty as absolute as if it had never been heard before. It has kept its primary place ever since. And yet we might almost say that our own age is uneasily searching for a new discovery in those well-worn words. A century ago, when our Missionary Society had lately begun its work among the negro slaves of the West Indies, the enthusiasts of Clapham discovered that the negro was their 'neighbour,' and that 'loving' him as much as they loved themselves involved them in heroic efforts to set him free. It seems very obvious to us, but it was not obvious to decent, humane, Christian people of the time. Mrs. Newcome, who took a deep interest in 'the sufferings of negroes,' is painted by Thackeray with a satire, good-natured indeed, but as keen as that which Dickens employed in the savage caricature of Mrs. Jellyby. Later on, good men discovered that the drunkard was their 'neighbour,' and that 'loving' him meant for themselves the readiness to give up alcoholic drink, and by legislation to invade the 'rights' of men who make money by the degradation of their fellows. This special case is not yet recognized so universally as that of the slave. But there are a multitude more to come, some of which may appeal to the man in the street still less. It may be necessary for us to deal drastically with

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the liberty of the subject if we are to 'love' the poor man's daughter enough to protect her from a fate which we shudder to dream of as falling on one of our own.<sup>1</sup> And the Churches are agitated as to whether the existence of dismal slums and grinding poverty in the heart of our wealthy civilization—conditions which shrewd Hindu propagandists are exploiting as fruits of Christianity—is easily reconcilable with loving our neighbour as ourselves. We have begun so far at the wrong end, and are trying to settle as Churches whether the Liberal, the Conservative, or the Socialist nostrum is the one and only remedy—a task supremely unsuitable for Churches to undertake. But ere long, it may be, God will send us a prophet who will bring the Churches back to their proper duty by the discovery that the helpless poverty of those who have never had a chance is as gross an offence against the 'Imperial Law' as negro slavery itself. And then at last even politicians who are no Christians will realize a mandate that they dare not misunderstand or ignore. Nor will even this exhaust the discoveries that have yet to be made in the simple precept. Some one will discover that the German is our 'neighbour,' and that the habitual style of militarists and scare-mongers of their persuasion cannot possibly be squared with a Law which Christians profess to regard as binding. A world where a higher Imperialism has put all national patriotisms back into the obscurity which shrouds them in the New

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the passage of the White Slave Traffic Act, in which the Christian conscience achieved a signal triumph. But I do not delete my words, as if the passing of this legislation exhausted our duty! For even Acts of Parliament, with or without flogging powers, will not turn human nature upside down.

Testament—where all varieties of homicide are remembered with abhorrence that hardly stops to differentiate—such a world will yet be, but it will emerge from a whole series of startlingly original ‘discoveries’ yet to be made within the compass of these few simple words. The Law of Christ is found to be the asymptote to which the curve of human progress is constantly approaching, only to meet it at Infinity.

This last paragraph may seem provocative to some who have not yet realized the full implications of the teaching of Jesus in this direction. I am sorry, but I cannot help it. I might have been content to illustrate my thesis with truisms, but they would fail to drive it home. The abolition of slavery was once as much of a ‘fad’ as the abolition of war is still. I am content to wear the name of faddist as an honour, if my critic is honest enough either to admit that the Law of Christ can bear no other meaning, or to try to reconcile war with its unambiguous and imperious demand. The effort will be good for him, and may even teach him things new and strange.

I have not really been deviating from Professor Cairns’s pregnant hint, to which I now return for a few closing lines of application. The Law which Jesus put forth as the first and all-embracing corollary of love towards God is for that reason alone the best example I could choose of a country still only partially explored by Christian thought. It is an easier example also than one chosen from less practical fields could be. And it illustrates well what we might call—reverting to the mathematical figure—the equation to that curve of

human progress: man's will continually drawing away from the Ideal, yet more and more faintly, so that every new point is a little nearer to that with which it will ultimately coincide. I shall not risk any speculation as to the discoveries of unappropriated spiritual forces which Dr. Cairns expects as the outcome of the present world crisis. We should all of us be praying for vision whereby to realize at once the magnitude of the crisis, the need of far greater resources than we now possess to meet it, and the certainty that the resources are there for our need. There is an intolerable strain upon the Church's present possession, which fails to suffice for her work at home. The deliverance will come through well-recognized principles of the Kingdom of God, if, when conscious of insufficiency for the narrower work, she boldly flings herself into a far vaster enterprise. The grace such a venture brings will mightily revive her energies for the task at home.

### V

I have treated, with a desultoriness only possible where a complete and adequate treatment can be referred to at each point, the lessons we may learn from the positive side of the leading religions of the world. There are other aspects which will occupy us in the next chapter. Meanwhile I must examine one or two features of the darker side which will help us in what we may call the pathology of religion. Professor F. B. Jevons<sup>1</sup> remarks that religions have

<sup>1</sup> 'Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion' (*Hartford Lamson Lectures*, 1908), p. 58.

had sometimes to abandon religious ideas, and make 'a *tabula rasa* on which might be written a fairer message of hope than had ever been given before.' Christianity alone has never run into a *cul-de-sac*. But even Christianity has not been exempt from the universal law which ordains that the higher the organism the stronger is the tendency to revert to type. In it and in all the higher religions the law is seen at work which Virgil expresses in well-known lines<sup>1</sup>: all things are bound by fate to go back and be swept away, like a rower pulling up stream who relaxes for a moment the tension of his arms. Since religion can never follow the line of least resistance, but always depends on unrelenting effort of the soul, it is obvious that in the study of its progress we must allow very largely for the degeneration that comes from mere slackness. It is incomparably easier to say prayers than to pray, to perform rites than to love mercy and walk humbly with God. And so there is a force ever at work dragging men back to these 'beggarly alphabets'<sup>2</sup> of religion, necessary enough when they were just learning to read God's lesson, but childish in later days. Some suggestions have been made already (p. 56) as to the possible history of a degeneration which among some animistic tribes produces the phantom of a deity 'who created the world and afterwards abandoned it.'<sup>3</sup> According to the view there taken, this primitive Epicureanism

<sup>1</sup> *Georgics*, i. 199-202.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iv. 9. I do not mean to be dogmatic about this rendering of *στροφεία*. Quite conceivably it means 'phantoms.' See 'Lexical Notes from the Papyri,' *Expositor* VIII., i. 567 (June, 1911), or Deissmann, art. 'Elements,' in *Enc. Biblica*, 1261.

<sup>3</sup> See the Report, p. 25.



was the outcome of the apparent failure of prayer and worship\* in the winning of material blessings. A process closely resembling the Darwinian 'reversion to type' may be seen in the relapse into polytheism occurring at various periods in the history of Israel, in Zoroastrianism, and in Christianity. Such also is the return of magic, if Dr. Frazer is right in making this normally a prior stage to religion. There is a curious conservatism which loves to retain forms that once had a meaning, but by retention when no longer understood acquire a purely magical value. The Gâthâs or Hymns of Zarathushtra were chanted when their language was obsolete, and the people knew nothing of their meaning. Just so the Old Greek Bible is read in the churches of Athens, and the Vulgate in Roman Catholic worship everywhere, to congregations that cannot follow a sentence of them. Dead languages, archaic vestments, obsolete rites, are kept in religious use from the notion that divine powers will be offended by any change in the cult to which they are accustomed. The belief grows that the exact performance of ritual and the validity of the qualification of priests are jealously watched by those powers. The more these minutiae are exalted, the less chance has true religion with the mass of the people who are led to believe that they matter. Naturally these forces of degeneration act most powerfully upon religions which have emerged from the lower levels: 'He that is down need fear no fall.' We have no evidence that would justify us in the assumption that the downward tendency is the sole or chief explanation of the rudimentary condition of savage

religions. Some primitive peoples may once have been in a rather higher condition as to civilization and religion alike ; but in neither case is there any reason to suppose that they are descendants of people once on a high plane. In the case, however, of the most advanced religions it is all too possible that the sacred fire may be absolutely quenched, and a people once professing a lofty faith descend into the abysses of superstition and materialism, which lie very close together.

## VI

One more question may be attacked before we bring to a close the general survey of this chapter. It has reminded us that good and evil are inextricably blended in the long history of religion.<sup>1</sup> And there are voices among the leaders of some schools of thought to-day proclaiming aloud that the evidence convicts religion of being a disease of the human mind destined to disappear with the full development of culture. The testimony of prejudiced witnesses, as we are assumed to be, is of course rejected here. But we can call witnesses who are above suspicion. In a striking course of lectures published under the title of *Psyche's Task*, Professor J. G. Frazer shows how the institutions of government, of private property, of marriage, and of respect for human life grew up under the sanctions of primitive religious ideas. These ideas are all of them to our eyes as absurd as they are obsolete. They served a necessary purpose, and then gradually

<sup>1</sup> Compare what was said on this subject in chapter ii. §7.



vanished away. But it is just these 'absurdities' which did the work humanity needed; and religion is thus proved to have been indispensable even at the stage where its defence seems hardest. Perhaps however the epithet 'absurd' is only on a footing with those we may imagine passing through the brain of an old bachelor inspecting a nursery. He cannot be expected to understand the difference between the childlike and the childish. Yet he may learn some day that those absurd games, in which he would think it preposterous for him to join, were being used by discerning teachers to educate the children on natural and healthy principles in subjects of vital importance to their after-life. The epithet of contempt does not begin to become appropriate till we see those children's games continued when the children are grown up. Then they become evidence of mental weakness. Even so, religion may fail to grow, and become superstition. But when men are still in the child stage of progress we shall do well to engage, as Professor Frazer puts it, 'in Psyche's task of sorting out the seeds of good from the seeds of evil.'

Not only does religion, then, shelter the first beginnings of culture, and in its healthy growth continue to inspire higher developments of social life. We soon find that there are many close analogies in the progress of religion and of civilization, which encourage our confidence that the former is as true and necessary an element in human progress as the latter is always felt to be. Advances in civilization everywhere begin in limited areas, among peoples with special gifts, who can produce and make the best use of men with inventive genius.

Then other communities are affected, and the new institutions or inventions are spread from the original centre over a widening expanse. Man advances by a kind of cross-fertilizing: the individual, or the isolated community, can only develop to full advantage by the help of his neighbours, from whom he receives and gives to them in turn. He does not always learn from his superiors, or even his equals; sometimes those who are below him in one respect will be above him in another, and progress will result from the passing on of the best achievements of single contributors to the common store. So true it is that no man liveth unto himself. There is, of course, an obverse to this picture of progress. The worst as well as the best gifts are passed on; and some of these, like the microbes of a fearfully infectious disease, will start from one centre and spread their contagion round the world. But on the whole the resultant is an advance; and it is brought more surely and swiftly forward by the new conditions which make the whole world speedily acquainted with every step forward, wherever it has been taken.

On strikingly similar lines is the normal development of religion. Progress comes from invention: we have already seen that those whom we call prophets are the great inventors in the sphere of spiritual things. These new developments of religion have everywhere a strong tendency to spread themselves; and when the vital force of the new prophetic message is strongest, its self-propagating power is strongest too. The analogy, however, works also on the darker side. Just as the baser elements of civilization—the taste for alcohol, and

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its cheap and easy supply, for example—have a terrible faculty for passing on infection to neighbouring communities, so we too often find that religions borrow from one another their degenerate features instead of their best. It is rarely if ever that we meet with a religion free from syncretism, and in very many cases the adoption of foreign elements has been a symptom of decay. But sometimes it has been otherwise; and in any case we have to recognize that this mixture is a regular phenomenon in the history of religion, and may be beneficent. All depends, of course, on the character of the new infusion.

The parallel has its place in the apologetic of Christian Missions. Only what is valuable, and of universal value, passes from nation to nation, and becomes part of the world's wealth. Railways are covering the face of the earth: no one proposes to form companies for extending travel by bullock-wagon. Inventions are sometimes limited in scope to certain parts of the world, and would be useless in a climate different from that for which they were designed. Among religions there are only three which show any ambition to become world forces. Islam is spreading in countries where low animistic cults prevail. Buddhism shows a tendency to expand, and to struggle back to earlier and purer forms. It has even attracted a few European converts. The 'Buddhist Society' in our own midst declares its membership open to all who are interested in the study of the subject, irrespective of personal belief; but articles in its Journal show that it includes some real Buddhists. Whether counted or

weighed, the total number of converts Islam and Buddhism together have made in Europe and America would be easily distanced by any of the smallest sects of Christendom. Other religions keep themselves rigidly to their own countries or communities. Zoroastrianism, which has far more to offer than any of them, refuses to admit a single proselyte. Hinduism keeps its grip on India, but does not attempt to expand. Shintoism is peculiar to Japan. And so on. In contrast to this, Christianity is found to make its appeal everywhere. By far the most powerful apology for Christianity produced in our time is the *Historical Catalogue of Printed Bibles*, recently completed for the Bible Society by Messrs. Darlow and Moule. Four massive volumes, one of English and three of foreign languages, give us a complete bibliography, the fruit of many years' unremitting labour, and tell us what has been done so far in making the Bible known to the world. It is seen that while the premier society alone has published the whole Bible or parts of it in 450 separate dialects,<sup>1</sup> there is only one literary masterpiece that can speak in more than one-tenth as many languages as the Bible, and that is the *Pilgrim's Progress*! John Bunyan has passed the hundred, and Thomas à Kempis reaches about half that total. But where are the classics of Islam or Buddhism? Where are the great works of secular literature, or the authoritative expositions of Pure Reason, by which surely the Rationalist Press Association ought to be striving to compete with Christianity in the taming of the degenerate and the

<sup>1</sup> The figures are given up to May, 1913.

savage? And since there is no answer forthcoming, we may go on to recall the fact that all these versions represent results such as no other literature has ever pretended to match. Wherever this Book has gone it has uplifted and humanized and civilized the men who have yielded to it. And these are of all sorts and conditions: no part of the world is unrepresented, and no degree of culture. Our English Bible has been for centuries the one Book of otherwise unlettered peasants, and the first Book in the library of men of genius and men of learning. But the gulf between these is not as great as that which separates the races reached by the Bible Society.<sup>1</sup> The *Catalogue* includes scores of versions in the simplest and rudest dialects on earth, together with versions in elaborate literary idioms read by the learned alone. At page 1713 nearly fifty editions are described under the heading 'Zulu'; at page 1333 we begin to note over a hundred in Sanskrit, including some where Hebrew poetry is rendered in classical verse form. Some seventy pages describe for us the Bible in Chinese. There is classical language and colloquial, the latter in some twenty different forms. The next entry takes us off to North-West Canada, where the Bible Society has provided Gospels for the Chipewyan Indians, a tribe of some 500 souls. We turn the pages, and pass from Asia and America to Europe, from the rude jargon of small wild tribes, reduced to writing first in order to carry the Bible message, to the stately and sonorous dialect of some ancient

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civilization. No part of the world is unrepresented. In Arctic cold the Eskimos have read the Gospels for nearly two centuries in their own tongue. In India wild hill tribes like the Todas, though they number less than a thousand persons, may read the same words that the Brahman studies in Sanskrit: the unity of highest and lowest is reached in Christ. But here indeed is a point which might be most effectively proved by simply transcribing the alphabetic list for a few pages, beginning wherever we chance to open, and appending notes to locate successively the unknown names. And when we remember that all these versions arose out of a demand, and then created a demand—that they are not books for ornament or curiosity, but for use—we have the evidential value of the *Catalogue* in view once more. It is no racial faith that inspires the Book, but a world-religion, one designed for all the world, and already welcomed by representatives of all the world alike.

Till the R. P. A. magicians will do the same by their enchantments, or the missionaries of Islam or Buddhism enter into serious competition with the messengers of the Cross for the uplift of mankind, we may claim that Christianity has proved its claim overwhelmingly. Our study of Comparative Religion has made us thankful for the truth understood by those who have not yet received the Gospel, and has removed the reproach which narrower views of God brought upon religion. He has not left Himself without witness anywhere, nor allowed a small proportion of His children to monopolize the life-giving knowledge of Himself. But the more carefully and sympathetically we



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study other religions, the more clearly does it appear that Christ completes and crowns them all. The mission of the Church to all peoples of the world approves itself as the discharging of a debt due to every man as man. The Gospel by its fruits has shown how beneficent its message is wherever it is faithfully preached. Foreign Missions, for the scientific student of the evolution of culture, become justified as an indispensable instrument for bringing out the latent possibilities of backward tribes, and developing to their highest ethical level the life of the more advanced races. If this is true—and we eagerly challenge denial—the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, with its amazing growth in universities of every land, becomes very easily intelligible. It is no vague or antiquated cry that has called out the life service of thousands from the most cultured classes of our youth. The young man or woman who can look into the world's future is not likely to think life thrown away when a place in such a movement offers itself to satisfy the loftiest ambition. Careers of fame and profit and usefulness are open to brains and industry at home; but what is the attraction of the best of them compared with the work of him who goes to be the pioneer of a Golden Age for all the world?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE

WE have tried to follow the apologetic of Foreign Missions to its logical results, and have summed up the modern Christian position towards other religions. In a sentence it comes to this, that we are convinced of Christ's claim to crown all religions—to heighten and make permanent everything in them that is good, and to destroy all that is not good by the energy of a perfect ideal. If a centenary commemoration fittingly opened with a survey of the past, it must naturally close with a look into the future. We cannot hope to prophesy what that future will bring ; but we can at any rate form some estimate of our duty. There are many urgent practical problems that need settling. What is the form in which we are to present Christianity to the world ? What are its vital doctrines, and what may we leave to be open questions ? What are our aims, as to the constitution of the Church in the mission-field ? What policy does missionary statesmanship dictate as to the use of our forces and the methods of co-operation ? And many more.

Since this book has no pretensions towards exhaustiveness, even in its own restricted area, it is obvious that we may leave a large number of practical questions untouched, and especially those

which can only be determined by men with experience on the foreign field. I shall keep to the limitations of my title, and discuss only the missionary message and motive and mandate in the light of the comparative study of religion.

# I

Perhaps the very first question on which we must get our minds perfectly clear is this, Does it really matter what a man believes? We feel quite sure that God will act justly and lovingly towards those who are kept from the knowledge of His highest truth by no fault of their own. What motive, then, is there strong enough to justify the Churches in so great an expenditure of money and men?—and those its very best, for no other will do.

Now we must admit, and even emphasize, that the New Testament knows nothing of punishment to fall on men for an intellectual unbelief honestly held. 'He that disbelieveth shall be condemned' is read at the end of the Second Gospel, but in the appendix which textual criticism unanimously rejects to-day, as absent in our oldest manuscripts and in second century translations. In the Authorized Version the Fourth Evangelist (iii. 36) is made to say, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' But the Revisers rightly render 'obeyeth not' in significant antithesis to the first clause<sup>1</sup>: it is moral, not intellectual, rebellion that brings the penalty

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of ἀπειθεῖν, see 'Lexical Notes from the Papyri' in *Expositor* VII. vi. 89, 91.

The verse tells us indeed that faith brings life, but it is the faith of loyal obedience and trust. That mere intellectual orthodoxy has no power to save is reiterated by Scripture everywhere. Correct knowledge of the highest truth may be held by the very devils, as James the Lord's brother reminds us. In solemn denunciation of the orthodox teachers of Judaism, Christ Himself warned those who searched the Scriptures, thinking to have eternal life in them, while they would not come to Him to have life. W. M. Bunting's great hymn to the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> sums up the most solemn teaching of the New Testament in words that expose a peril to which all orthodoxy is liable :

If e'er to forms of truth I gave  
The homage due, great Lord, to Thee,  
E'er deemed the Cross could, spell-like, save  
While yet Thou dwelledst not in me,  
Reprove my folly, but forgive,  
And make me understand and live.

The real nature of the blessing conferred by the purest and highest conception of God will appear presently. Meanwhile let us note what the voice of Jesus says to us about the future destiny of the 'heathen.' We are not left to conjecture as to the principles upon which they are to be judged. There can be little doubt, I think, that the 'nations' in Matt. xxv. 32 are as usual the Gentiles, which in this context will mean those who have not heard the Gospel. It is only by this that we can understand the *surprise* of the 'righteous,' who, if they

<sup>1</sup> No. 770 in the last edition of 'Wesley's Hymns' (1876). Why it does not appear in our present hymn-book is one of the mysteries.

had been Christians, would have had this great Scripture enshrined in their hearts as their Lord's most precious encouragement for the life of loving-kindness. If, then, the unevangelized heathen are primarily intended,<sup>1</sup> we have the clear law laid down that men are to be judged by God according to their behaviour to their fellow men. Kindly and unselfish behaviour to the meanest and least worthy of men is accepted as direct service done to the glorified Christ: neglect—it is tremendously significant that neglect, not cruelty, is spoken of—is an insult to His majesty, who is 'not ashamed to call them brothers.' How stupendous a field of 'discovery' awaits the world in the implications of this all too familiar passage will appear to every thinking reader.

Now if this is God's demand from all mankind, and the teaching of this passage clearly implies that there are 'heathen' men who can rise to it, where does the advantage of Christian belief come in? Not only men who never heard the Gospel, but men who have heard and in perfect honesty rejected it, will have their place in the vaster energies of the next world determined by their treatment of their brethren here. And we are conceding gladly that neither ignorance of Christ nor honest inability to give Him intellectual belief is a bar to the living of a life which will sometimes put to shame that of many who sincerely profess the Christian name. What, then, is the claim we make for the Faith, and why does it really matter after all what a man believes? I think the answer can admit of no

<sup>1</sup> I say 'primarily' because *a fortiori* the principle applies to Christian nations. Nothing is eliminated but the note of surprise.

possible doubt. Throughout the New Testament—though the fact has been in all ages grievously overlooked by a too narrow view of the place of faith in Christian theology—the right relation of the human soul to God is exclusively regarded as a means to an end. If it is more blessed to give than to receive, He whose name is the Blessed God must be exalted above all receiving for Himself. Nor can we give Him anything but His own gifts. Love and service to Him must be offered through those whom He has appointed to be receivers of what is due to Him. So it is that love towards our fellow man pays our debt to the All-Father: sin against him, whether of omission or commission, is sin against God. And the whole teaching of the New Testament is concentrated on the task of driving home the central fact that a right understanding of God is the most powerful of all means for producing right conduct. To love God in any sense that deserves the name draws with it the necessary consequence of love to man, and to love is the fulfilment of every righteous law: a law that cannot be thus fulfilled is condemned. The one purpose of the New Testament, then, is to bring to us the knowledge of God as He is, by the only way that can bring it to us in its perfection. Jesus Christ enables us to see the Father and realize His love for us; and he who surrenders himself to the gracious influence perfectly is impelled by the mightiest power yet seen on earth to love his neighbour as himself.

There is a converse to this proposition which must not be ignored. The withdrawal of this mighty power brings into human life a temptation



that only very strong souls can withstand. He who, even on grounds of sincere intellectual conviction, ceases to fear God, has a terribly weakened motive for regarding man. I have been insisting strongly on the fact that a great many agnostics are such from sheer honesty; and I acknowledge ungrudgingly that their agnosticism is sometimes nearer to the mind of Christ than the indolent orthodoxy of some who call Him Lord. But it will hardly be questioned that a multitude of deniers have small claim to such a verdict. How often has the 'emancipation' been more moral than intellectual! The flinging away of religious restraint is not generally likely to encourage the unselfish life. And when we ask what Rationalism has done for society, the answer is hardly doubtful. Is it mere coincidence that the great national institutions of this country which strive to rescue and bless helpless children are born of fervently Christian impulses? Benjamin Waugh, Barnardo, Müller, and our own Stephenson—were they Rationalists? And could we imagine a '*Children's Home*' earning its title as these magnificent institutions have done, if their inspiration had been an atmosphere of denial, and 'the good Lord Jesus' were never named by those who lovingly and successfully tend the children committed to their care?

It is a notorious fact that even with so mighty a force to drive us, to rise into the lofty heights of duty is appallingly hard. The man who has achieved it is the very climax of the Creator's work. Brain is great, but too many of its most wonderful accomplishments have been associated

with qualities which have rendered their possessor the object of pity or hatred from other men. He who perfectly loves his fellows, and lives wholly to help and bless them, has attained a rarer triumph, as even the instinct of humanity confesses. The mad Nietzsche will serve as exception to prove the rule. It naturally follows that we need the most powerful combination of forces to produce in us ideal goodness, defined as perfectly unselfish devotion to the interests of others. The claim of the modern defender of Christianity will be that the highest and purest conception of God proves the most powerful of all instruments for producing goodness. Where other forces produce their tens, Christ produces hundreds. Moreover, the less our belief in Christ is adulterated, as it were, with ideas irrelevant to the supreme purpose, the more potent it will be. For ethical results the operative principle in the Christian religion is the exaltation of Christ as Divine Saviour, and the realizing of Him in His nearness to the soul. Overload this with ideas unrelated to it, and there is danger lest the mind will give to these the attention due to what is weightier. If means of grace, ecclesiastical attachment, subsidiary doctrines of our creed, help us towards more vital realization of Christ, and of God through Him, they will be of service towards the ultimate end of religion; but if they draw off our attention towards themselves, they weaken the ethical energy of the Faith. It does matter, therefore, what we believe, and even what form of Christianity we accept; for we need in our human weakness the most living force we can command to make us what we ought to be. The universally acknowledged



eminence of the Society of Friends in philanthropic devotion is—to give a clear illustration—not a little connected with the fact that they are less pre-occupied than most Christians with other than the vital elements in religion.

If this is true, we can easily see how the argument for Missions stands to-day. In our ideals of social reform we feel that we cannot be satisfied until equality of opportunity has been won for every young man and woman entering on life. That is, we instinctively feel it unjust that a highly talented person should be debarred from using talents to the advantage of the community by the mere accident of birth; and in the case of more ordinary persons we are anxious that each should find the work most suited to capacity. This is the purpose of the educational ladder which we try to set up, from elementary school to secondary school and university, with public money to neutralize as far as possible all disadvantages arising solely from poverty. My illustration is based on what is generally admitted: I am not referring to the much wider meaning that advanced reformers put into the phrase 'equality of opportunity.' A principle of this kind is really bound up with the first law of Christianity. If I truly love another man as much as I love myself, I must obviously be ready to give him every opportunity I myself enjoy, if it is in my power, and to help him with sympathy and guidance that he may use the opportunity. Apply this to natives of Africa, India, China, and the whole non-Christian world. If I have a religion which makes it a hundredfold easier for me to live an unselfish life, it cannot conceivably be consonant

with that religion that I should keep to myself so great a help towards the fulfilment of God's primary command. Will not the 'heathen' rise up in the judgement against me and condemn me for selfish appropriation of the gift of God, which He must have meant for all His children? My brother from afar says to me in effect, 'I have not lived the unselfish life, or behaved to my neighbour as I ought. But I had no call like yours, no beautiful and winsome Example, no promise of an indwelling Power that could master my passions and tame my unruly will. You knew all this, and you knew I had a right to know it as well as yourself. Why did you not tell me your good news, and give me a chance of being what I ought to be?' In other words, we are 'debtors,' as Paul declared, bound by the very fundamental law of our religion to pass it on to every man who does not yet possess it, *because* it is incomparably the mightiest power in enabling weak humanity to achieve the life that God demands.

## II

'A fundamental law of our religion' I have called it, which compels us to go into all the world and tell our good news to every son of man. It would have startled our fathers had they been told that we must stop and prove that the Founder Himself laid this foundation. We have to stop and prove the validity of a great many axioms in this questioning age; nor need we complain if the process ends in a firmer grip of the fact that Jesus Himself had the world outlook. For apologetic

purposes, of course, we must not go immediately to the Great Commission which so majestically closes the First Gospel. The scene of those words is laid in the post-resurrection time, and we are told that all such discourses had their birth in the subjectivity of the disciples. For much the same reason we are forbidden to remember the 'other sheep' of the Fourth Gospel. I do not feel any compulsion to halt in my argument and defend our right to use these two sources, conspicuous though they are in the precious little group of sayings which give the missionary confidence that his commission is from no mere man. We can prove our case without them, and reclaim them at the end. Surely it is irrational to lay such exclusive stress on words in which Jesus declared the restriction of His own mission to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The meaning of that restriction is obvious enough. It needed no preternatural insight to realize that Jesus Himself would not be allowed many years for His work within the limits of Judaea and Galilee. One of the Twelve seems to have realized it months before the end, and to have shaped his course accordingly. The others, blinded by their enthusiasm, never guessed what deadly forces were gathering momentum with every month of that too popular ministry. To prepare the 'remnant,' as Isaiah would have called them, for the work to which the whole providential ordering of the nation's history pointed—to sift the host of the Lord before a campaign which could find no place for the fearful and afraid, nor for any willing fighters who were less than heroic—that was the utmost that the Master could do in the brief time allotted

Him. His supreme work was to be achieved not by golden words and travels rich with mercy, but in awful silence and helpless suffering on the Cross that gave His missionaries their gospel. But that He meant them to take that gospel far beyond the limits of the house of Israel is plain from the oldest documents without using those which interpreted so well the apostolic tradition. In that long mental struggle with which His ministry opened, had He not before Him 'the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them'? What are we to suppose He was thinking of when that vision spread itself before His soul? Had He never read the great prophecy<sup>1</sup> which declared it 'too light' a task for the servant of Jehovah 'to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel'? Was Paul the first to discover in that most familiar of all the prophets a destiny limited only by 'the end of the earth'? I have mentioned only one among many prophetic voices which we know to have been very much in the Lord's mind. If Israel became particularist, and claimed a monopoly in the favour of God, it was not the fault of the great teachers who so emphatically set before God's people an ambition worthy of their name. To make Jesus less universal in His outlook than His greatest forerunners is too grotesque an absurdity to need refutation.

One explanation only could be ventured for silence on the part of Jesus, were such silence even plausibly established. Great stress has been laid recently on the eschatological element in His mission. The thoroughgoing upholders of this interpretation

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlix. 6; cf. Acts xiii. 47.

would make us believe that Jesus never hoped to mend the world, but only to end it and inaugurate a better. If so, and the end was to come within the generation contemporary with His earthly life, there was clearly no room for a world mission; and He could never have declared that the good news of the Kingdom *'must'* first be preached unto all the nations.' Now the eschatological interpretation of 'the Kingdom' has exceedingly strong claims on our attention. It is a key that has successfully unlocked not a few mysteries. We can acknowledge this heartily, and yet not allow it to be a master-key. The Gospel is in fact far too complex in its mysteries of grace to be unlocked by any master-key. In every science we meet with enthusiasts who have discovered the one principle which explains everything at once; and we are justified in the suspicion that comes by a sure instinct to all who know. That the kingdom of God was for Jesus in the Unseen is certain: that He looked for its early manifestation seems no less assured. But when a too rigorous insistence on the exclusiveness of this central thought requires us to weed out sayings as well-attested as any in our documents, we may reasonably ask whether the theory has not been abusing the limited monarchy which it lawfully claims. That the Gospel must be universally proclaimed before the Advent is an unambiguous saying in our oldest narrative.<sup>1</sup> That Jesus warned the Jews that they might be thrust out from the Kingdom, and their places taken by men who should come from the ends of the earth,<sup>2</sup> goes back to that lost common source,

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xiii. 28, 29=Matt. viii. 11, 12.

older than Mark's Gospel, the Aramaic original of which most critics attribute to the Apostle Matthew, according to the well-known notice preserved in Papias. The same document had the similar warning of the Baptist that God needed not Abraham's children after the flesh to fulfil His purpose; He could raise up children to Abraham out of those stones.<sup>1</sup> The universalism of the prophets, then, was heard in tones as emphatic as ever in the very age that listened to Jesus. Going back to Mark, we note how on the one occasion when Jesus could indulge the luxury of helping an outsider, He tempted her faith to make its venture with the hint 'Let the children *first* be filled.'<sup>2</sup> In His blessing on the deathless deed of the unnamed woman at Bethany, He speaks of 'this gospel' as about to be 'preached throughout the whole world.'<sup>3</sup> One other gospel source we may draw on—the special information which Luke collected, presumably during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea. There have been attempts to claim the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel as the evangelist's free composition. But they are crowded with delicate touches which exactly fit the ideas of pious Jews in the period to which they are assigned, and entirely fail to fit any later time. With the highest estimate of Luke's genius as a writer,<sup>4</sup> it seems absolutely incredible that he could have evolved such from his own historic imagination,

<sup>1</sup> Luke iii. 8=Matt. iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vii. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xiv. 9.

<sup>4</sup> I can hardly resist the temptation to allude *en passant* to the progress of Luke's rehabilitation as an historian. New inscriptions are noted in the *Expositor* for November, 1912, and January, 1913, which prove that Quirinius really was legate of Syria in 8-6 B.C., and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene during the reign of Augustus. We are getting on



or would have cared to try. It is therefore highly suggestive that Luke has 'delicately coloured the introductory history with universalism,' as Professor Harnack puts it. The universalism was there, among pious and humble people, who kept up the tradition of Israel's golden age, and read Isaiah, Jonah and Malachi in the light that the narrow Pharisaic schools had never quenched. Indeed the Pharisees themselves, as Professor Harnack shows in the opening chapter of his great work on the *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, had a progressive school that eagerly preached a universal propaganda. 'Love men and draw them to the law' was a maxim of the justly famous Hillel, Gamaliel's master. It was 'not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, in all probability,' says Harnack, that the anti-foreign reaction won its complete victory. Does it not follow that Luke had no need to 'colour' his picture? The burden of proof rests with those who would deny the presence of universalism in the religious environment of the early life of Jesus. And if that universalism was all around Him, it will take some cleverness to explain how He—on the most rigidly humanistic view of His Person—came to repudiate what so many men far below Him had fervently held for ages past.

The attitude of the historical Jesus of Nazareth towards a world propaganda is so vital a matter for us that I must spend a little more space on my demonstration. To harmonize the Christ of the Great Commission and the Fourth Gospel with the Jesus of our oldest records is essential if we are to have unflinching confidence in our missionary

mandate to-day. The 'Christ that is to be' must have no discontinuity with the Christ who has been or the Jesus in whom He dwelt, one with Him in personality, during those 'days of His flesh.' We might still go forward with enthusiasm to preach Christ among the nations, even if the dream of enthroning Him over the whole world came first to Paul, and never disturbed the strangely narrow outlook of his Lord! But we want to understand the Christ of our preaching; and if Jesus '*could not*' have bidden His followers go and make disciples of all the nations in His name, I confess that His human life becomes to me inconsistent with itself and with all the probabilities that emerge from an unflinchingly critical reading of the gospel story.

With this preface, then, I proceed to comment on the argument of Professor Harnack in the fourth chapter of his *Expansion*. However strongly we differ from this distinguished scholar's view of the central doctrine of Catholic Christianity, we owe him too great a debt to be light-hearted in repudiating his judgement on the interpretation of our Gospels. He has fairly crushed for us the criticism that would disintegrate the Lukan writings, and assigned dates to them and the first two Gospels which even conservative scholars like Dr. Sanday are afraid to accept, so early are they. His *Expansion* itself is a book that claims the most careful study from all whose master-passion it is that the Church should repeat in our own day the triumphs of her first three centuries. The keener, therefore, is the disappointment raised by the first reading of these eight pages on 'Jesus Christ and the Universal



Mission.<sup>1</sup> We are warned off the ground by the dogmatic statement (p. 41) that Paul knew nothing of such a general command as the Great Commission ; and there is appended a footnote :

It is impossible and quite useless to argue with those who see nothing but an inadmissible bias in the refusal to accept traditions about Jesus eating and drinking and instructing His disciples after death.

Perhaps. And yet there are many of us, keen modernists in all our thinking, who do honestly believe that science as well as experimental religion is accumulating evidence for the objective reality of that after-life of Jesus, to which it is no valid objection to say that it presents phenomena beyond our reason. If the 'spiritual body' were proved nothing but a duplicate of the earthly body, we should only have fresh mysteries to solve in the place of the one that seemed to be removed : it is more reasonable to acknowledge the existence of something which must in the nature of things transcend our present powers of apprehension. It is not on historical or critical grounds after all that Harnack and others 'refuse to accept' such 'traditions,' but on the strength of a philosophy natural enough in itself, yet hardly final, as modern developments in the criticism of the miracles of healing suffice to show.

Harnack's conviction that the idea of a world mission was not contemplated by Jesus is based

<sup>1</sup> I can only examine very summarily an argument highly condensed and crowded with detail. I should like to refer for fuller treatment to an admirable article by the Rev. George Jackson in the *Expository Times* for November, 1911 (xxlii. 54-62).

on two or three texts from the Synoptic Gospels. There is Matt. x. 23 and xv. 24, with other subsidiary passages, admittedly less decisive. The former is, of course, to be placed with Mark ix. 1 as evidence of the expectation of Jesus that the Advent would be within the lifetime of His own disciples. Is this adequate proof that Mark xiii. 10 is 'an historical theologoumenon, which is hardly original?' If by a careful exegesis we can reconcile these two sayings, does not the only critical ground for rejecting that contained in the older Gospel vanish? It is rejected purely on subjective arguments, just as the word 'first' in Mark vii. 27 'is not to be pressed.' And, as we can see clearly enough, *both* these sayings fulfilled themselves within that generation. The apostles of the circumcision never 'completed' the evangelization of the 'cities of Israel'; and those of the Gentiles did proclaim the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire before the giant awoke, too late to crush a rival power that had established itself firmly everywhere. We do not adequately realize what that generation was destined to see. We know how the Son of Man 'came' to the judgement of the Jew, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus. We forget the yet weightier judgement of the Gentile. When Rome decided to 'persecute for the Name,' to declare a war of extermination upon the Church, it was veritably a 'judgement of this world,' and a casting-out of the prince thereof, little though he dreamed that so it would be. Diocletian understood, though Nero was too dull. But that the expectation of Jesus as to His Advent was fully satisfied by the events of the third quarter of that first century, so

uniquely momentous for the religious future of the world, would certainly not be claimed. It seems to be characteristic of prophecy that the great principles of Divine Providence, insight into which is the prophet's supreme qualification, fulfil themselves first in a partial and local manner, and lead on to a series of larger fulfilments, culminating in a far-off issue too vast for the human mind to grasp without an age-long preparation. It is like a landscape in a mountain country, where the same line of sight strikes across low foothills a mile away to lofty shoulders farther off and huge peaks on the horizon, and only rare atmospheric conditions enable the eye to distinguish between them. The illustration may help us to realize how this perspective of the future was a necessary condition of the humanity of Jesus, so that in foretelling His Advent He used much imagery that belonged to the near future fulfilment, in the midst of that which concerned an ultimate reality only to be expressed in symbol, and destined to tarry for its complete manifestation till countless ages have passed away.

The other passage urged by Harnack is much less difficult, and we have anticipated the answer. The case of the Syro-Phoenician woman was, of course, '*an exceptional case* for Jesus; and the exception proves the rule'<sup>1</sup>—which is only that for very obvious reasons<sup>2</sup> His own earthly ministry was limited to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The argument drawn from these two passages is, I venture to think, altogether over-balanced by Harnack's very cheerful admission

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 39; the italics are Harnack's.      <sup>2</sup> See above, p. 133:

as to two others. He cites the prophecy of Matt. viii. 11, 12 (Luke xiii. 28, 29), and declares that its 'prophetic manner arouses no suspicion of its authenticity. . . . Why should not Jesus have said this?' The parallel from John the Baptist follows. Then again, 'The programme of the speech at Nazareth (Luke iv. 26, 27) is here of primary importance, but even in it the universalism of Jesus does not seem to rise above that of the prophets.' Really, if it is securely established that His universalism rose as high as theirs, in words actually spoken during His earthly ministry, we have as much as we want. Why is it necessary to explain away anticipations that the Gospel would be proclaimed in the whole world, if Jesus actually said that God's table should be filled with guests from east and west, and that God's prophets now as in the days of Elijah and Elisha might pass by an ungrateful Israel and bring blessing to the Gentile? How were the guests to come unless they were invited? and how were the messengers to go unless they were sent? We might almost be content to concede all the limitations forced on our Synoptic records by a disputable criticism and a strained exegesis, when the use of Paul's own question,<sup>1</sup> with its homely and obvious common sense, compels an opposite deduction from words which are left!

There will probably be many readers of the foregoing pages to whom the repetition of these questionings as to recorded words of Jesus will be distasteful enough. For them there is no difference between words uttered after the resurrection and those uttered before the Master's death; nor are

<sup>1</sup> Rom. x. 14, 15.

they careful to know whether a saying comes from 'Q'<sup>1</sup> or the Gospel of John. I need not, however, stay to prove to them either my own deep sympathy with their feeling or the necessity in an apologetic argument of laying our foundations on a rock which opponents will not try to undermine. I have sought to show that even the residue of authentic sayings which the most brilliant and learned of critics will allow to be relevant contains the justification of those other sayings which he will not admit. But why did the Master say so little about the world mission? Or, if He really said much more, what sealed the lips of those evangelists who have given us relatively so little, on the widest possible interpretation? The answer lies in the most fundamental characteristics of the teaching of Jesus. The Sower everywhere sowed seed: He did not plant ripe corn. Some of it sprang up at once and filled the earth with a golden harvest; and some of it is barely green in the furrows even now. Dull wits have bidden us justify His omissions if we can. Why did He never say anything about the accursed institution of slavery? Why, if the doctrine of the Atonement has any truth, did it find no place in His teaching—except, of course, in an isolated phrase<sup>2</sup> which He 'could not' have uttered? And so on. These wise men have never, one would think, tried to teach a child. Else they would have known that the most efficacious of the true teacher's methods is the

<sup>1</sup> The first letter of the German word for 'source'—a convenient and non-committal symbol in general use to denote the Greek collection of Sayings used by the First and Third Evangelists.

<sup>2</sup> Mark x. 45. Need I add that I do *not* isolate that phrase?

skilful guidance by which the pupil is led to find a thing out for himself. Jesus never declared the abrogation of those old-world tabus on food which had served a good purpose long ago. But He did declare the self-evidencing truth that defilement could not come to the man from that which never touched anything but his body. And the evangelist—once 'interpreter' to that Peter who needed a heavenly vision to make the inference plain to him<sup>1</sup>—breaks his rigid rule and interpolates four laconic words of comment: it followed, then, that all kinds of food were clean! But long before Mark wrote those words down, his master had learned a very much more far-reaching inference. So it was with all the seed-thoughts of Jesus. They were not ready-made articles of manufacture—they were spirit and life, and they could not help germinating. This absolutely central characteristic of the Great Teacher's method, on which I dwelt from another point of view in the previous chapter,<sup>2</sup> prepares us for realizing that our missionary mandate would not, after all, be weakened even by the complete acceptance of the case argued by the great thinker I have been quoting, the acknowledged leader of Liberal theology in Germany and the world as a whole. We may fitly close this discussion with Dr. Harnack's own words, all the more impressive when we recall his position of detachment from doctrines that we hold dear:

Rightly and wisely people no longer noticed the local and temporal traits either in this historical

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 19; Acts x. 15. Mark is called Peter's 'ex-interpreter' by Papias.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 109 ff.



sketch [in the Gospels] or in these sayings. They found there a vital love of God and men, which may be described as implicit universalism, a discounting of everything external (position, personality, sex, outward worship, &c.) which made irresistibly for inwardness of character; and a protest against the entire doctrines of the 'ancients,' which gradually rendered antiquity valueless. One of the greatest revolutions in the history of religion was initiated in this way—initiated and effected, moreover, without any revolution! All that Jesus Christ promulgated was the overthrow of the temple, and the judgement impending upon the nation and its leaders. He shattered Judaism, and brought out the kernel of the religion of Israel. Thereby—i.e. by his preaching of God as the Father, *and by His own death*<sup>1</sup>—he founded the universal religion, which at the same time was the religion of the Son.

Christianity, then, as a world-religion does actually date from Jesus of Nazareth's first and last sermon in the home of His early years, and from pregnant sayings, scattered over the records of His ministry, which could not possibly have fallen unheeded on the ears of men to whom He Himself was incomparably more than even His most memorable words. It might seem that we have been dwelling on the past to a disproportionate length in a chapter that by its title invites us to look towards the future. But Jesus is Christ, and 'Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.' We cannot tell with certainty what He will be in His world-wide Kingdom except by learning what He was when He first 'reigned from the Tree' over the awe-stricken hearts of those who obeyed His royal call.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's italics. I quote throughout from Dr. Moffatt's translation of the *Ausbreitung* (second edition, 1908).

We gain our strength and enthusiasm for the future by gazing yet again upon that past which is ever present, and all our problems will find their adequate solution by a truer understanding of it. One of the leaders of the German Liberal School lately reviewed in caustic language the work of a medical man, Herr Lomer, who wrote about 'Sick Christendom,' with diagnosis and treatment in proper medical style. Professor Niebergall<sup>1</sup> answers him according to his folly :

*Diagnosis* : Acute pantheistic moralistic intellectualitis.

*Treatment* : An acquaintance with the nature of Religion, Christian Religion, and Christian Belief.

The treatment suggested would be highly beneficial for a good many shallow unbelievers of our time, who have managed to assure themselves that 'the good Lord Jesus has had His day.' A little understanding of history, a little intelligent study of the works now being accomplished all over the world in the name of Jesus, might work some remarkable conversions among the superior persons who sniff at 'superstition' as outworn.

### III

We are sent, then, by the life even more than the words of Jesus, to preach the Gospel to all the nations. What gospel? Has the nature of the message changed through the operation of the Time

<sup>1</sup> *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, xxxvii. 58.



Spirit ; or is it modified by reaction from the non-Christian religions which the Christian missionary strives to supplant? How do 'our unhappy divisions' affect the doctrine we teach those who are outside our Faith? Each of these three questions would need a treatise for its answer : indeed treatises are written or writing for the purpose. 'The Faith and its Interpretation' is the province of a department of the Free Church Commission now sitting. The reaction of non-Christian religions is, as already observed (p. 96), a prominent subject in the masterly Report to the Edinburgh Conference which has been so often quoted in this book. 'Co-operation and Unity' is the subject of another Commission which reported to that Conference. With these object-lessons as to the magnitude of the issues involved, it seems an impertinence to spend a few pages in summarizing the opinions of others, and almost worse to advance any of my own. But it would be cowardly to pass such vital questions by, and I feel I must make some sort of a statement to complete the scheme that my subject demands.

On the first question I had much to say in my opening chapter. A period in which there has been abnormal development in every department of human knowledge must necessarily witness a corresponding development in the answer Christianity gives to the problems of life and thought, so many of which are absolutely new. When we try to gather up the general impression, we find it amounting to this, that there is increasing emphasis laid now upon the central and fundamental doctrines, and a greater readiness to leave open some which used to claim undue prominence. The Fatherhood

of God, the Deity of Jesus and His supremacy as Saviour of men—these are the great doctrines on which men of widely differing Christian communions can join in fellowship to-day. I might illustrate the fact by quoting the formula unanimously accepted, after prolonged and most careful discussion, by the representative committee described in a former chapter (p. 20 f.). A great inter-denominational movement was recommended to describe as its aim 'to lead [its members] into full acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God and Saviour of the world, and to active service of the Christian Church; to promote among them regular habits of prayer and Bible study; to keep before them the importance and urgency of the evangelization of the world, the Christian solution of social problems, and the permeation of public life with Christian ideals; and to enlist them in whole-hearted service of these objects.' And with this was placed the simple form in which the young man or woman on joining this fellowship is asked to say 'I desire . . . to declare my faith in God through Jesus Christ, His Son, my Lord and Saviour, and the surrender of my life to Him.' It is almost laughable to think what our committee would have come to, had any of us thought it vital to define 'the Christian Church,' to state the nature of Inspiration, to frame a doctrine of the Sacraments, or make a precise declaration as to Retribution, Apostolical Succession, Transubstantiation, Presbyterian and Congregational and Methodist forms of Church government, Higher Criticism or Anti-criticism. All these and other causes would have found their warm defenders. But in spite of the

conviction with which we held our several views on these subjects, there was an eloquent silence about them throughout the day's deliberations, even as there had been throughout the fortnight at Edinburgh. We were concerned with *essentials*, and on these we were, from the first, entirely at one.

I think it would be very largely agreed that this attitude is typical of Christian thought in the West to-day. I am naturally leaving out the Roman Church, which still professes to sit like Canute on the shore and bid the tide ebb at its will. But Modernism is giving the *Semper Eadem* a great deal of trouble, and the Papal chair may need moving on yet, like Canute's own. Returning to the freer forms of Christianity which alone can claim the future, we notice that this very rapid and important *rapprochement* has been attained without any conspicuous growth of indifference as to the secondary things in our creeds. It is primarily due to the intensity of our feeling that Christ is everything for Christianity, and that every element in a Christian's creed must be tested by its relation to Him, as the one Revealer of God and Saviour of men. On matters of importance, where difference of opinion is consistent with unfaltering loyalty to Him, we feel instinctively that the vanishing of difference is unlikely, and almost undesirable. Men are born with temperaments which refuse to be forced into a single groove, and there is room enough within the freedom with which Christ has set us free. There is above everything the difference which separates Christians as soon as Sacraments are mentioned. It is typical and fundamental, and there seems no reason to expect that it will ever be obliterated in

the 'Church militant here on earth.' Its only real evil is the intolerance it generates. The Roman denies the Anglican minister validity of orders, reality of sacraments, or a place in the Catholic Church. The stiffer kind of Anglican does exactly the same to the Wesleyan. And the strongest proof that this series—Roman, High Anglican, Free Churchman—represents in this regard a progressive approximation to the mind of Christ, is the fact that the Anglican recognizes the Roman, while we readily recognize both, provided that they 'love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.'

The same may be said of other permanent differences within the True Church. The conservative temperament will always produce a tendency to lean on authority, just as the liberal makes men impatient of it. At one extreme there will be an apotheosis of Church organization, at the other an exaltation of anarchy. In one camp the march of thought—scientific, critical, philosophical—is watched with suspicion or anger; in the other it is even prematurely welcomed. And here again it is the accompanying intolerance which alone makes real mischief. It exists in both camps, and most violently in the Extreme Right and Left, which condemn themselves chiefly by this fact. 'Let both grow together until the harvest' was spoken of wheat and weeds. But we may be quite sure that the Master would say the same of the many varieties of good seed that are clothing His fields with green. Truth is One, but that does not mean that my conviction is true and the other man's conviction all false. Truth may be relative—a doctrine may be wholly true for me, and a widely different doctrine may be

equally true for my brother Christian. The reconciliation will come one day to our reason. Let it come to-day to our heart. The Red Cross Knight goes forth to-day to do battle with Error, as he went in Spenser's immortal allegory, and he does not go alone.

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,  
Upon a lowly asse more white than snowe,  
Yet she much whiter—

and her name was Una, the One. But there is no unity in Truth that we can see, except the unity of the Person who said 'I am the Truth.' Thank God, Christians are coming to see that: there has been a wonderful advance even within the period that we remember who are still in middle life. Our Foreign Missions have contributed not a little to this growth of tolerance, and in their turn they make the heaviest demand upon it. We must not and dare not bewilder the non-Christian world with a spectacle of acute divisions. Our brethren who cannot bring themselves to tolerate a doctrine or a Church order widely different from their own, yet equally held 'in Christ,' must ask themselves whether, after all, such forms are not preferable to paganism.

And this is just what is visible in the practice of Christian missionaries to-day. The Bible Society is behind all the Missions as an object-lesson of their unity; and a recognized comity already prevents a great amount of wasteful and injurious overlapping. It must, of course, go much further. But the very presence at Edinburgh of such a man as Bishop Gore, and the reading of a sympathetic

letter from a Roman ecclesiastic in the Pope's inner circle, were welcome indications that the facing of the non-Christian world is beginning to burst some bonds that held the Church fast for ages. We may not see 'Apostolical Succession' disappear, but it will matter very little if we find its champions ready to concert an onward march with Christians who follow the apostles in another division of the 'one army of the living God.' That this is coming to pass very strikingly on the mission-field is shown by many testimonies cited in the Edinburgh Report which has figured so largely in these pages. Missionaries were asked whether their experience had 'altered either in form or substance' their impression as to the 'most important and vital elements in the Christian gospel.' There is an inspiring unity in the diversity of the answers quoted. The Report tells us (p. 70) :

The replies of the majority [of the missionary correspondents from China] may be summed up in the words of one: 'No change as to central doctrines, but greater hesitancy in fixing the circumference.'

Another, a Baptist, replies :

Yes. Becoming less a churchman and more a Christian. Particular tenets of my own Church are falling into the background in view of man's need of Christ. The kingdom of God is greater than any Church, and Christianity than any creed.

From another country (Japan) and another communion comes an extract which one would greatly like to see unabridged. I quote a sentence or two from it as typical (p. 118) :



'My life in the East has taught me the need of simplicity in faith and practice, and I have found myself shedding quite a number of things which twenty-five years ago I should have considered as being of very vital importance. But amongst the things I have shed I have not found it necessary to include any of the articles of the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds, or my belief in Christianity as the supreme and perfect revelation of God to man.

The writer describes himself as 'having been changed from a more or less strait-laced Anglican to the nondescript Christian' that he is now. In what respects, the context shows; but I quote the words as illustrating the effect of mission work in dissipating inherited prejudices and preferences, in forcing first things to the first place, and making the Christian preacher forget his ecclesiastical and doctrinal labels and remember nothing but the Sovranty of Christ. It is the highest example of a tendency which idealists begin to see moving in the world at large, and regard as its brightest hope. Men absorbed in the furtherance of human welfare as a whole become very impatient of what the militarist calls 'patriotism,' in its petty limitation of outlook and its heavy toll of human life and happiness. They do not abjure the true patriotism, any more than a philanthropist abjures his family ties. Patriotism means a passionate ambition that our own country may be worthy of our love and pride, may never be led into anything unworthy of her past, and may be the pioneer of the nations in the promotion of peace and honour and righteousness. Even so the missionary who has imagination and faith for his work learns to transcend all sectional limitations and win the vision of the Catholic Church

which is grander far than any earthly embodiment of the ideal. He loves his own Church, and strives to make her ever worthier of his love, but she does not become the jealous rival of other communions. His joy in her triumphs is like the joy of a high-minded man when a near relative of his own has done some golden deed.

A natural corollary of this intensified concentration on the Divine Christ as the one Message of the Faith is a most remarkable tranquillity in the missionary mind as to subjects which greatly disturb good Christians at home. The question was asked of the missionary correspondents of the same Commission :

To what extent do questions of ' higher criticism ' and other developments of modern Western thought exert an influence in your part of the mission-field, and what effect do they have on missionary work ?

The answers reported are as a whole wonderfully encouraging. The account (pp. 112-17) of the condition of things in Japan is extremely suggestive. There was the period when everything seemed shaken by a Unitarian propaganda from the West. But once again it proved that there was ' a removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.' The critical reaction did much harm for the time, but the missionaries expect to gain more than they lose. I resist a strong temptation to quote largely from this and other chapters of the Report, to show how much greater is the optimism of the missionaries than that of very many devout souls at home. One testimony will suffice



(p. 115), chosen for its special aptitude for the moral I am trying to draw :

Just an honest and impartial presentation of the truth, with emphasis on the positive, saving elements of the gospel, is what is needed. When this course is pursued there is nothing to fear from the higher criticism—at least if it be not of the extreme type. The kernel of the gospel is what touches the Japanese, and they do not care much about secondary questions.

Surely this missionary (who would neither 'keep back the results of criticism' nor 'flaunt them before the people') gives the right message to the Church everywhere!

Need I point out how completely in harmony this conclusion is with the whole genius of our Methodist missionary work at home and abroad throughout these hundred years? We have always stood for the living experience of Christ as the supreme element in religion. We have shared the general 'shaking' in our views of the Bible, and even in our formulated Christology. We have been and still are deeply divided in these important matters, men's various temperaments and upbringings swaying them towards extremes of horror and of welcome to modernism in all its forms; while in men of balanced and open minds and wider knowledge there has been the readiness to march on fearlessly, but without undue haste or love of novelty for its own sake. Yet in all alike our salvation as a Church is still, as it ever has been, that we instinctively make personal experience the indispensable evidence of the Faith. The student goes to preach from his desk and his books, from patient assimilation of novel scientific

theories in biology or in biblical criticism that would have seemed to our fathers destructive of the very foundations of belief. The ploughman takes his rest from week-day toil in preaching out of a knowledge confined to one Book and the commentary of his own heart and life. But in the pulpit the ploughman and the scholar proclaim the same Divine Christ, and start from the same text: 'One thing I *know*, that whereas I was blind now I see.' It is this message which explains alike our Manchester Mission and our evangelization of Fiji. It inspired our cultured home missionaries, from John Wesley to Hugh Price Hughes, our humbly-born evangelists, with native genius unschooled, from John Nelson to Thomas Champness. And all our great names on the Missionary Society's roll of honour, from Thomas Coke to David Hill, brought the same gospel to the lands where they laboured for Christ. Are we, with such a heritage, to turn craven at the signs of the times, preparing to commit the Gospel to a blind defiance of knowledge? Surely we of all men are called by our history to 'speak to the people that they go forward'! We preach Christ in the language and the thought of our own day, but always as a present Saviour. In the Father's house are many abiding-places: the race, like the individual, moves on from one stage of development to another, and we are never at one stay. But into each of them the Man Divine goes before us to prepare a place for us, and we can fear no evil when He is with us and we follow Him. The religion of a great soul-certainty is the one which will hold the future. And if our beloved Methodism is true to this, we may feel wholly

assured that when our great-grandchildren keep the second centenary of the wonderful venture of faith which we recall to-day, the story of what God has wrought through our successors will be continuous with the volume we are closing now.

#### IV

Our general answer, then, to the question whether our gospel for the non-Christian world is modified by twentieth-century thought, is that the Time-spirit itself has driven Christendom back upon the shortest and oldest of its Creeds, the only one in use within the Apostolic Age. 'Jesus is the Christ,' understood as the apostles understood it, sums up the doctrine which all the Churches can agree to place in unchallengeable primacy as the message they must bring to the world. Teaching men this personal loyalty to a Living Saviour, known to us in His present significance by our records of what He was in His human life, and the experience of age after age that tells what He has been to His servants ever since He vanished from men's sight, we shall show them 'how to observe all that He commanded us.' This supreme task achieved, we can afford to leave the Church in each mission-field to organize itself according to its native temperament. That is what the Church in the West has done. It is a commonplace of history that 'the ghost of old Rome sits on the ruins thereof'—that the Vatican lies very near the Palatine Hill. It is hardly less obvious that modern British forms of Church organization—Presbyterian or Independent—arose naturally from the

genius of a race not tolerant of autocracy, but keenly alive to the advantages of order and discipline in alliance with freedom. What organization will best suit the needs of the Church in India, China, or Africa may be safely left to its members when they are strong enough for self-government. British Methodism, at any rate, which under Wesley's own rule so readily left her American daughter to develop her own constitution, will not be found hesitating when the day comes that marks the new and welcome era in the history of the Church in a land conquered for Christ.

More directly in the line of my subject is the question whether Christianity in these various new provinces of its empire will be found in any way coloured by the survival of elements from the religions that preceded it. If the evangelization of the world were left in Roman hands, the affirmative answer would be emphatic. The stress laid by Rome on the virtue of external rites has in all her history led to practical syncretism. Old gods and old rites have been furnished officially with new labels. In many cases, however, the people themselves have clung to the old interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Often, of course, no great harm is done. To take a haphazard illustration, the Russian blessing of the waters at Epiphany 'in commemoration of Christ's baptism' is fairly harmless in itself with this ingenious orthodox explanation of an age-long and world-wide custom;<sup>2</sup> nor is there much mischief done if the old idea of

<sup>1</sup> On all this see above, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Rendel Harris believes it is to be traced at Jerusalem in the popular notion of a New Year angel visit to the waters of Bethesda, implied perhaps in John v. 7.

the 'luck of the water' at New Year clings to the minds of simple and superstitious people. Even so, however, we can never be quite sure when a seemingly harmless superstition may not prove very mischievous. Applying these considerations to the policy of Rome in adapting native ideas wherever possible to Christian interpretations, we can easily see how often it may result in leaving the people to their old polytheism, with very little change in the real thought that lies below the forms and names employed. And to procure a real and permanent uplift in the character of a degraded people, there is an obvious need of a total change in their outlook. Animists, accustomed to perpetual fear as they move about in a world swarming with dangerous spirits, will not be truly emancipated by labelling these spirits angels or demons, teaching exorcisms that use the name of the Trinity, and then going on as before. They only conceive Christ as the sons of Sceva did: the new magic in His name is more potent than the old, but of exactly the same order. Surely a complete break with the past is the only way of liberating such poor thralls! The missionary treats these fears as a mother treats those of her little child when found crying in bed in terror at weird sounds or ghostly shadows in the darkened room. To laugh at the fears as silly will not dissipate them in the case of a highly-strung and timid child. Her own presence is the first and most effective exorcism, however desirable it is to use other methods to develop the sense of security in the future. So the messenger of Christ must portray the Living Master, all-powerful and all-loving, whose perpetual nearness makes it a matter of sheer indifference whether

there are or are not 'legions of wily fiends' around the object of victorious Love. The teacher wins his whole aim when he has opened the ears of his poor, frightened children to hear the voice that whispers 'It is I: be not afraid.'

A few sample problems might be briefly named in which missionary statesmanship has to decide where adaptations of ancient habits of thought and practice can be safely and wisely adapted to Christian use. We might take next one lying not far away in essence from the animism just referred to. Ancestor-worship in China is a tremendous problem for the missionary. The Edinburgh Report says (p. 47):

While all agree that ancestor-worship as now practised in China cannot be performed by Christians, some of the writers moot the question whether a modified worship, in the form, say, of a memorial service, would not be possible among Christians in China. Its entire neglect is a grievous hindrance to the spread of the Christian faith. One writer says: 'Were we to compromise in regard to ancestor-worship, much of the opposition to our propaganda would disappear.'

It is noted that this deeply-rooted belief makes filial affection a heavy weight in the scale against Christian discipleship. Parents are convinced that if their children do not pay them their due of worship they will themselves be 'beggars in the nether world,' and the children are held back from Christianity by an instinct arising from a duty we hold as sacred as they do. The Roman Catholic has a resource ready to hand, from the use of which we are, of course, debarred. All Souls' Day is an ancient accommodation to ancestor-worship, and the priest



may simply transfer to this commemoration nearly everything that his Chinese convert has hitherto practised. I need hardly stay to show how extremely dangerous this concession has proved in Europe. It is emphasized by the curious duplication of the festival. All Saints' Day took the elements capable of being entirely 'baptized into Christ'—one repeats instinctively Lowell's exquisite lines :

One day, of holy days the crest,  
I, though no Churchman, love to keep,  
All Saints—the unknown good that rest  
In God's still memory folded deep.

All Souls' Day was added to be the dumping-ground of ideas which truer Christian instinct rejected.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, can Protestant missionaries do, who are eager to conserve the filial piety which is woven into the fabric of Chinese ancestor-worship, but dare not compromise in any way the 'aloneness' of God? Are there resources upon which they can draw within the New Testament doctrine of God and man? Clearly the 'modified worship' just mentioned requires from our point of view a great deal of emphasis on the epithet! A 'memorial service' we should naturally suppose to be incapable of the idea of 'worship,' however 'modified,' if directed towards the dead, instead of Him in whom they rest.

It seems almost an impertinence even to discuss, from one's study chair in England, what our

<sup>1</sup> On the relation between these two celebrations see J. G. Frazer, *Adonis Attis Osiris*<sup>2</sup>, 317 f. (= *The Golden Bough*<sup>2</sup>, Part IV.). The preceding pages exhibit the essentially heathen character of All Souls.

missionary brethren may legitimately do to meet this very grave problem. Were I to suggest anything, it would be with an assurance that if my suggested line is right, it is safe to have been anticipated; and if it is avoided, it fails to meet the need. There is, of course, in our Faith a great wealth of teaching about the indestructibility of goodness. The commemoration of this great fact, and of the blessed life so certainly enjoyed by 'heathens' who did deeds of self-sacrificing love to the least of Christ's 'brethren,' will furnish a subject abundantly sufficient for the solemn memorial service suggested. And such services are indeed held as it is. The Rev. C. A. Gaff tells me that Christians in South China assemble for singing and prayer in their own burial-ground at the time of the annual festival of the dead, when their heathen neighbours are burning incense at their family tombs. The institution is indeed one that may bring great comfort to sorrowful hearts, as I can testify from experience in my own neighbourhood at home, where there is a service of this kind which I was recently privileged to conduct.

The real difficulty arises when we come to the case of those whose parents have lived openly evil lives. Can we bid the convert tell them, if living, or comfort his hopeless sorrow for them if dead by telling himself, that he will pray continually for them, wherever they may be, to a God who will take account of any good there was in them, and may in His own way—who knows?—make use of a yearning human love that pursues a sinner even into the Unseen? I doubt if the sternest Protestant would forbid as sinful a prayer for the dead in such a



sense as this. Dr. R. F. Horton himself, commenting on the one New Testament text that seems to look this way,<sup>1</sup> allows that 'there may be nothing to hinder the sorrowing soul from breathing out its prayers for the departed into the Father's ear.' But if on grounds so free from superstition as these we were to encourage Chinese Christians in offering prayers *for* their dead, and so meeting the national sentiment that prompts worship offered *to* them, what would the probable consequences be? The history of the Christian Church has proved the peril of prayers for the dead when they are systematized as an institution. The peril is set forth in strong language, but not too strong, by Dr. Horton in the note referred to, and it constitutes a weightier argument against the practice than the rather fine distinctions on which he seems mainly to rely. In a country like China the danger of such consequences would be peculiarly serious. Even the memorial service, unless the purity of Christian faith is jealously guarded, might degenerate by imperceptible stages into something indistinguishable from the ancestor-worship it was meant to supersede. The risk may have to be run, and only the men on the spot can judge whether it is worth running. They may well decide, in answer to the suggestion of a 'modified worship' which some of themselves have put forth, that for the wellbeing of the Church in China, visible before their eye of faith in its future strength, it is safest only to 'preach Jesus and the

<sup>1</sup> *Century Bible*: Pastoral Epistles, p. 148, on 2 Tim. i. 18. I confess I do not quite see the 'difference between an optative and a request,' between the 'wish' and the 'prayer' that Onesiphorus (assumed 'with some probability' to be dead) may 'find mercy of the Lord in that day.'

Resurrection,' and comfort bereaved souls with words like those Paul sent to Thessalonica long ago.

It is interesting to put by the side of this Chinese problem the closely related problem of missionaries in Japan. The same Report (p. 102) is found to claim as 'a valuable national asset' the 'easily Christianized' element in Japanese religion which to the outsider might seem to be practically identical with Chinese ancestor-worship. The Japanese keep the annual All Souls' festival, like the Parsis, the ancient Greeks, the Romans, and many another people, at which the departed are believed to return for three days to their old homes, where offerings are made and a feast prepared. Ancestral tablets in every house are connected with special prayers, which Shinto priests offer to the dead and Buddhists for them. Yet the Japanese section of the Commission conclude that

It is certainly possible to imagine a transformation of this [reverence paid to ancestors and departed heroes] into the Christian idea of the great Communion of Saints, which binds the seen and the unseen in one vast fellowship.

A subtle but real difference between the Japanese and Chinese attitude towards these ancestor spirits may perhaps account for the greater readiness of Christian teachers in Japan to adapt the native religion in this particular. I, of course, do not venture an opinion, mentioning the difference only to be a reminder of the risks of theorizing at a distance.

To discuss a tithe of the problems which arise

in the mission-field in connexion with the possibility and the wisdom of 'baptizing' elements of native religions would go far beyond the purpose of this book, even if my own lack of personal experience did not disqualify me from undertaking it. I take up one other problem, with the same purpose as the last, as an illustration of a general principle drawn from a very different field. In many countries Christianity finds religions which in various forms put forth the precepts 'Handle not, nor touch, nor taste.' To what extent, if at all, can Christianity go to meet these tabus halfway? Or, to put it as Church historians, we ask how far may Christianity make terms with asceticism? In some applications of the question there is little difficulty. A well-known missionary writes (Report, p. 150) :

I have found after long intercourse with Moslems that their idea of our ceremonial uncleanness is on the part of many a real hindrance to their acceptance of our doctrine. I would go a long way in meeting Mohammedan prejudices, for instance, in abstaining absolutely from wine and swine's flesh, as well as in matters of dress and ablution, to win my Moslem brothers.

So again (p. 163) we find Indian missionaries earnestly pleading for a general abstinence from beef, the eating of which produces such horror among the people. Such abstinences, of course, are wholly on the lines of Paul's example. The immense majority of Methodist ministers and members in our own country abstain from alcohol for this very reason, and would cheerfully give up bacon and add a few extra washings if there were

such a motive to prompt them. This is not asceticism, for the central principle of it is altruistic. Nothing that enters the mouth can defile the man, and a Christian is wholly free. But he counts it a privilege not to use his freedom to the full, if by these means he may 'gain some.'

The problem of asceticism is, of course, acutest in India, where many devoted missionaries have denied themselves absolute necessities of life, in the hope of thus winning their way to the Hindu mind. One noble man has recently, by example more than precept, founded a brotherhood which by the extremes of its assimilation to native life, and by the rigorous privations endured in the effort to get near to the people, seems almost to rival the faqirs. We cannot help admiring devotion so unsparing, recalling the spirit of Francis himself. But on the whole I do not think I could encourage a young missionary to yield to the impulse that might bid him follow these beautiful lives in the outward features of their service. I would not question the call of the Brothers themselves. Their revealed duty may well be as rare as the physical constitution that can stand such conditions in India; and if it means the early sacrifice of precious lives that might have borne fruit through many years, we must leave that with Him who gave the call, and knows best how and where to use servants utterly given up to His obedience. But, as Brother Stokes himself admits, I believe, the Church cannot venture to encourage what must be left absolutely to the individual and his Master's Spirit in him. The Church can only feel that her missionaries' lives are precious to the cause of the Kingdom, and

must be conserved in every possible way. A European in India denying himself meat or little 'luxuries' may be endangering his health as much as a native faqir practising austerities of a kind no Englishman would or could possibly attempt. The whole-hearted missionary must often chafe at the necessity of indulging himself, as the hostile native may count it; he would find it positively easier to live with his people and eat as they do. But if the evangelization of a wide district depends on his maintaining his strength unimpaired, the game of tennis and European food may be set with the missionary's private prayer as direct agencies in the accomplishment of the spread of the Gospel.

I had written the preceding paragraphs and those that follow on the same subject, when there arrived the Rev. Benjamin Robinson's little book, *In the Brahmans' Holy Land*, secure of its welcome as a gift from the author. I read it through immediately, and am tempted beyond measure to dwell on its unconscious self-revelation of a man of most unusual power of mind, and devotion that shrank from nothing, employed with singular success on the problem of finding a way into the Hindu's inmost mind to enshrine the Lord Christ there. Mr. Robinson has at last been induced to tell of the experiment he made, which, as Dr. Haigh shows in the Foreword, robbed the W.M.M.S. after only seven years' service of a missionary uniquely equipped with an understanding of the language, literature, and thought of the people.<sup>1</sup> He felt himself called to live as the natives lived, that he might

<sup>1</sup> The book was written, alas! only just in time. Since I wrote these words the news has come of his departure.



remove the barrier which separated him from those he came to save. He made a long tour, travelling barefoot and in native dress, and having—so he thought—trained himself by gradual reduction of flesh diet to abstain altogether from that which Hindus shuddered at as inexpiable sin. And the sorrowful result was seen when he was carried on board ship for home, having kept up many of these abstinences to the end, destined for the rest of his life to yearn through long hours of pain for the people he came to understand so well at such a cost. For alas! the lesson of that first and most extreme form of the experiment was only that caste is *jāti*, 'birth,' and between Englishman and Hindu there is a great gulf fixed which even love and sacrifice cannot bridge. The sacrifice was not vain—no sacrifice of love can be. It helped the missionary to see into those heathen hearts, and even across the great gulf to flash the light of Christ into them. But in its eager purpose that the messenger might become an Indian to the Indians it failed entirely. Does the story help us to understand why the Son of God must be *born* Man if He would speak to us wholly as one of ourselves?

There is another consideration, which is indeed the formal reason for discussing this subject at all. What of the danger lest the Hindu should mistake the essential character of Christianity, and see in it a religion willing to admit affinity with Hinduism itself in value set upon austerity? It would be an absurd misunderstanding, of course—as absurd as the popular conviction of which Mr. Findlay tells me, that the missionary 'ascetic' must be expiating some deadly sin! But in this matter we

cannot afford to risk misunderstanding. Sooner or later the natural bent of the people would probably make austerity and the accumulation of merit thereby a tenet of Christian doctrine. Now there have been periods when the exaggerated protest of asceticism may have been providentially used for the cleansing of a sensual world. But nothing could be clearer than the doctrine of Jesus Himself and His disciples on this question. He recognized that His followers would sometimes fast, as He had done in the wilderness, when intense absorption made them indifferent to the claims of the body. He ordained that all such fasting should be spontaneous and free from display; but He never prescribed the practice in any way,<sup>1</sup> and as far as we know never observed it Himself. He 'came eating and drinking,' in conspicuous and intentional contrast to the ascetic John. In His own presence His disciples 'cannot fast,' He said; and on that condition they never had a call to the act of severity and gloom except on that terrible Sabbath when His body lay in Joseph's tomb. The joyous conception of life as the gift of God, the refusal to reject any creature of the Father if sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, were the outward and visible sign of a religion of emancipation, proclaiming everywhere the glad-hearted message that men may even eat and drink 'to the glory of God.'

Then came the Gnostics, and a tide of reaction set in which was long in ebbing. They commanded to abstain from sundry foods, and they forbade marriage as impure. Paul, who spoke so sternly about their

<sup>1</sup> That was left to later interpolators of the Gospel text, as in Mark ix. 29.

tenets, had himself forgone the joys of home life for the sake of his work.

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,  
Yes, without stay of father or of son,  
Lone on the land and homeless on the water,  
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

But other apostles had not this necessity laid on them, and took about with them a Christian wife. Both types are represented in our modern Missions. The fragrant memory of David Hill keeps ever with us one who in this as in so many other respects trod in the steps of Paul. To more of the brethren has been given the privilege of showing the people among whom they labour the Christian home, which by its beauty and peace ranks among the first of attractions towards the faith that makes it possible. Here, then, as well as on the other side of the question, our answer can hardly be doubtful when we are asked whether our religion is to yield its freedom and naturalness in order to conciliate prejudices the removal of which is one of the great tasks of the gospel. It is right to give up indifferent things, provided that their abandonment does not risk the health by which the work is to be done. Only very exceptional circumstances can justify concessions which may obscure the very nature of Christianity.

## V

We face the new century with a missionary motive deeper, clearer, more compelling than ever—with a gospel the light of which is gathered



into a focus of dazzling brilliance, so that the half-lights surrounding it are hardly seen. Spiritually, the men and women whom we shall send forth in the new age will stand just where their fore-runners stood. Personal devotion to the world's Saviour is a gift without which no one is likely to go out as a missionary, and when that gift is really given the results of it are the same in one age as in another. Intellectually, and materially, the modern missionary has an immense advantage. His mind may enter on a heritage won for him by a century more richly laden with increased knowledge than any in history. Experience for which men had to pay with their health or their very lives is ready for him before he leaves home. Problems over which the noblest once blundered wofully are solved for him. Fuller knowledge of the language he is to use has been acquired. The Bible is there for him, with the pioneer translators' work already brought on its way towards perfection. Modes of travel unknown to the early missionaries reduce to a minimum the time wasted in getting to his work. The march of medical and surgical discovery has reduced for him the risks of tropical climate. In all these ways the missionary of 1913, given equal zeal and equal talents, may achieve incomparably more under similar conditions than the heroes of 1813.

Let us try to survey the field for which the home Church has to find labourers. A bird's-eye view is all we can attempt: to look at details would only obscure the picture which is to bring home to us our duty. Books like the Edinburgh Report, in its first section on 'Carrying the Gospel,' or Dr.

J. R. Mott's *Decisive Hour of Christian Missions*, brought up to date by Mr. J. H. Oldham's comprehensive survey of 1912 in the January issue of the *International Review of Missions* for the new year, will help an earnest student to make a beginning.

Following the sun round the world, we look first at Japan. Methodism is taking its share in the evangelization of this country—one of immense importance to the future of the world—in the labours of our American brethren. 'The effective evangelization of Japan has not been more than begun,' says Mr. Oldham, who quotes the fact that of towns with 5,000 inhabitants not one in seven has a Protestant missionary, while one more may have Japanese workers. And this is in a country where the mass of the population live in small villages. What can wise secular observers be thinking of the destiny of a people so gifted, who are learning the hard materialism of the West, and its fertile inventiveness in destructive agencies, without those humanizing influences which have softened the savagery lying so near the surface of all our boasted civilization? Our own colonies on the other side of the world have taken fright at the possibilities of Japanese invasion, and are enforcing conscription with the ruthless tyranny which militarism ever employs. They would consult their safety better by training Christian missionaries!

Passing by Korea, the land where lost political independence is being so wonderfully compensated by spiritual emancipation, we come to China, where the direct work of the W.M.M.S. begins. What God has done in sixty years through our

Church may be seen skilfully summarized in one chapter of Dr. and Miss Findlay's masterly little book, *Wesley's World Parish*. It will show us vividly how much we must do if we are to be worthy of our past. How much is yet to be done if this largest unit of the world's populations is to be written among the Christian lands may be seen from the Edinburgh Report.<sup>1</sup> There is one province which has over five hundred missionaries, with nearly thirty thousand people to each one of them. At the other end of the scale is a province with twenty-three missionaries, each charged with a third of a million souls. Tibet, with six and a half millions, has no Missions at all. On the estimates available—and the Commission thinks they are probably under the truth—

The Church has in four sparsely settled provinces a field as large almost as Burma and Bengal combined, with a population equalling that of the Turkish Empire<sup>2</sup> plus Ceylon, without any regular preaching of the gospel.

Since the Edinburgh Conference history has been made in China. An almost bloodless revolution, in which a Chinese Christian took a leading part, has destroyed a monarchy of immemorial antiquity and started China on a new path, the issues of which are incalculable. What I am writing now, before the first anniversary of the Republic, may be wholly out of date when this book is published. Meanwhile, from a bewildering mass of data, imperfectly known, we gather the clear impression that at any rate the opportunity is unparalleled in all the history

<sup>1</sup> Commission I., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Of course before the war.

of Missions. And in face of it the directors of a great Missionary Society have to confess<sup>1</sup>

It seems impossible to arouse any special interest in the great opportunity, or to call forth any generous enthusiasm in regard to it.

Meanwhile, with the Church only half awake to the chance of centuries, the great world powers, nominally Christian, are pursuing their old selfish policy towards the young State with its boundless possibilities, and making an anti-foreign outburst natural, and almost excusable, were it not that the brunt of it falls on the only foreigners who have gone to China for China's good and not their own. Worst of all, the long black record of England's shame in her exploitation of China's vice culminates in the continued export of a thousand chests of opium per week, dumped in Shanghai with threats of what will happen if these prohibited articles are not paid for. In this way our great name protects villains who would consign millions of human beings to perdition for their own gain. Oh for the sound of the 'dread voice' which Milton recalled, to rouse again the slumbering conscience of England! Fresh from the teaching of Jesus, an apostle could scathe hardened avarice into half-repentance with the words, 'Thy silver perish with thee!' Has Peter no successors now?

What I wrote above, in anticipation of the possible antiquating of my words before they reached the reader's eye, has been fulfilled in so startling a manner that I leave the last paragraph

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S. Report. I quote from Mr. Oldham's editorial referred to above, p. 16 from the *Review* for January.

untouched, unspeakably thankful that I can add in the proof stage a new one recording the wonderful works of God. First came the event of April 27, when at the earnest request of the Chinese Government all Christendom united in prayer for the new Republic in its hour of need. I cannot stay to draw the contrast between the new and the old, or press home the urgency of the call that comes to the Christian world from a China so pathetically eager for the prayers of those whom but lately it counted as very fiends. It was a fitting sequel to that day of prayer when almost immediately afterwards a British Minister could announce in the House of Commons that our opium trade with China was dead. We cannot wipe out the shame of memory, but our future at least is to be pure from stain. And to-day we may hear the voice of the Master proclaiming a new Beatitude on His faithful followers who through long years have pleaded and striven in His name that this crown of infamy should be taken away. The Emancipators of 1838, and the crusaders against legalised vice, the Congo Reformers and the Anti-opium agitators—these are the men and women of whom England may boast, and Christianity point to them as her apologia to-day!

Burma, Ceylon, and India meet us next as we travel west, passing by smaller fields in which our own Society is not working. The change is comforting to a Briton who loves his country, and believes in her claim to be regarded as a great benefactor of mankind. The justice of that claim is the sole plea we can urge for the continued existence of our Empire, and the only power by which

we shall keep it. In China, alas ! our past record in secular relations has been almost irredeemably bad : the stain of Mammon's finger has been over them all. But in India there is a very different story to tell. Our administration of a vast responsibility has been increasingly disinterested as the years have passed. We can feel nothing but pride as we watch the triumph of our Indian Government over unrest and disloyalty, very easily explained, and conquered by methods which made the Hindu mind realize at the Delhi Durbar the results of the fact that our Throne is Christian. We have saved untold millions from perishing by war and by famine. We have given them justice between man and man. We have laid the foundations of a vast system of education, and are even now building solidly thereon. We are training them gradually for an extension of that share in self-government which is the ultimate and rightful ambition of every lover of his country. What other nation has done such things for subject races which have come under the white man's rule ? And what deeper cause is there than the fact that the principles of the New Testament have moulded our public conscience to a greater extent than in any other land in history ?

The situation in India is described by Mr. Oldham as 'on the whole encouraging' to the friends of Christian Missions. The census results of 1911 show that about eleven out of every thousand souls in British India and Burma are Christian, nearly five of them being Protestant ; and that 'in the last twenty years the increase of the Christian population has been 69.9 per cent., as against 4.6



per cent. among Hindus, and 16.3 per cent. among Mohammedans.' The growth 'is the result of mass movements towards Christianity among the depressed classes.' The Edinburgh Report<sup>1</sup> calls attention to the steady and rapid growth of the Christian community, which through the past half-century has been enlarged by fifty per cent. at the end of every decade. There is evidence also that intensively as well as numerically the Church has been developing to a very marked extent.

But side by side with this there is the uniform story of the undermanned condition of Missions everywhere. The areas absolutely deserted may not be as conspicuous as in China; but when the Decennial Conference is found urging 'that on the lowest computation of the requirements of India the staff of missionaries should be increased *fourfold*,'<sup>2</sup> we can realize how far we are from making an adequate effort to use the magnificent opportunity which India gives us to-day.

Before leaving India I would recall the immensely important fact that there is missionary work to be done here in England by those who seek to lead India to Christ. In our British Universities there are very large numbers of Indian students. For instance, there are thirty-eight at present in Manchester; and the numbers at Cambridge have involved the College authorities in serious practical difficulties. These men will, of course, have influence in India out of all proportion to their numbers. If

<sup>1</sup> Commission I., p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Commission I., p. 158. This was in 1902, but I am afraid the requirement is not yet met!

Christianized here, they will be missionaries of the highest value, whether devoted to that calling or occupying a lay position in the Church. But if not—if led by social prejudice that keeps them at arm's length to form a hatred towards our country and its professed religion, what a peril will they become to the British position in India! There have been cases known where Indian parents whose sons were coming under missionary influence sent them to study in England! And alas! we know too well that such a method of keeping them from Christian influence is terribly effective. The subject—which to a less extent affects other Orientals studying in England—is being carefully watched by missionary organizations, and especially by the Student Christian Movement, which can probably do more than any others. The work bristles with difficulties, but its urgency is unmistakable from every point of view. Even the merest secularist may well acknowledge how important it is that these hundreds of Indian students should get a favourable impression of the imperial country to which his own is bound. What, then, should be the feeling of the Christian?

Following the sun to the next great mission-field, we try to sum up very briefly the position in Africa. The name of the Dark Continent recalls to us this year more than ever the name of that supremely great missionary which is written indelibly across the map of Africa. The secular world was slow enough to recognize David Livingstone in his lifetime; but it is suggestive to notice how ready it is to-day to acknowledge the fact that the messenger of Christianity—in this respect not so far beyond many of



his less known brethren—was a pioneer of civilization. Whether the 'civilization' that so readily appropriates the fruits of the missionary's self-sacrifice has been more of a blessing than a curse, may well be doubted. Certain it is that the only parts of Africa where the advent of the white man has brought unmixed blessing are those in which the missionary has been left alone. Livingstone's successors have made some parts of Africa stand out among the most conspicuous triumphs of Christianity to be found in the whole world. And alas! by way of foil, we remember that among their achievements has been to drag into the light of day unutterable infamies perpetrated by white men and a 'civilized' Government in the pursuit of filthy gain. One of the gravest facts of the missionary situation meets us vividly as we fix our eyes on Africa—the advance of Islam, and the failure of the Church to get to grips with the only non-Christian religion which has any great proselytizing activity. It is notorious that the animistic negroes in Africa are accessible to Christianity now, but will be exceedingly hard to win when Islam has laid hold of their allegiance. And this is going on under our eyes, while we know it, and know so well what Islam means for the races it subdues. We may say this without lack of sympathy for its better side, excellently presented in the striking article I was quoting in the previous chapter (p. 100). We were most of us full of hope and sympathy for the Turk when he threw off the yoke of the detestable Abdul Hamid, and launched on what we thought was going to be a new life. But alas! the new has been all too continuous with the old.

and all Europe sees that we can no longer trust the Moslem to rule over professing Christians—except, of course, in Armenia and Asia Minor, which are not Europe's concern! Beyond everything we know what Islam does for womanhood. If Islam be acknowledged to mark an advance on the low animistic religions that fall so easily before it, it would at the most charitable estimate be only a case of the good being the enemy of the better. The wonderful results of the triumph of the Cross in Uganda—the brightest gem in the crown of the Church Missionary Society—show what Christianity can do in the moral and material uplifting of a primitive race, the thrall of a religion that held them down at the lowest level in the bonds of pervasive fear. What has been done in Uganda could be repeated in every part of Africa in as brief a period as the third of a century which has transformed that country—if only the eyes of the Christian world were open!

I am only taking a glance at each continent as it comes to meet the sun, so as to get from each a hint as to conditions in our world-problem which we must try to include in our general survey. I cross the Atlantic, then, to another Dark Continent, as it may be truly called for another reason. South America is perhaps less touched by Christian Missions than any other part of the world. It was in that great continent that the work was done which made Charles Darwin acknowledge the wonder-working power of Christianity as a civilizing agency in places he had thought to be utterly hopeless. His lifelong subscription to that Society must surely stand among the most convincing

testimonies the cause of Missions can plead. But as a whole we are doing very little, and that because the continent belongs to white men claimed by a Christian Church. Edinburgh left untouched the problem of which this is a conspicuous illustration—very properly, for the work of carrying the Gospel to the heathen was big enough to claim her whole attention. But Rome has allowed the fire of religion to go out altogether in so many of the Latin races that we can only feel the deepest concern for countries where she is the sole witness for Christianity. Our own Missions in France, Spain, and Italy are enough to show us that countries nominally Christian may know as little of Christ as those which are avowedly heathen. And one result is—Putumayo!

From the Western Hemisphere there are very many subjects that tempt us to continue our survey. One is loth to pass by the splendid results of the Gospel among the Indians of Canada and the Eskimos of the Far North. The South Seas cannot be forgotten when a Methodist thinks of Missions. There our pioneer missionaries faced and tamed the cannibals of Fiji, as in our own generation their true successor, George Brown, has done in other savage regions—witnesses of a power still active in the world which no culture or science can rival. But the time would fail me were I but to name the fields of the West where the light of Christ has shone to men in darkness. One region only I must further name, partly because I can here speak of what I have seen, but mainly as it contributes elements to our survey which so far have not been brought in.

The story of the first beginnings of Methodist Missions among the West Indian negroes takes us back to the very birth of the great world-work we celebrate to-day. We were privileged to take a leading share in telling the unhappy slaves the good news that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. And so when at last the devoted labour of Christian saints in the mother country had brought Great Britain to the most glorious deed in the annals of her Empire, the emancipation of the slaves, there was a negro population prepared by the Gospel for the use of freedom. The history of three-quarters of a century illustrates the fact that the task of Christian Missions is not complete when alien religions have been expelled, and a people has for two or three generations borne the Christian name. With the less advanced races manhood comes but slowly ; and if the negro is to reach a maturity in which he can stand alone, his vigorous youth must still be lovingly watched over by white men who for Christ's sake are not ashamed to call him brother. Two generations of freedom instead of one, with the contrast between British treatment of the negro and that meted out to him by the whites of the Southern States, account for the fact that we have no 'black peril' in the West Indies. It shows how far the race has advanced under sympathetic guidance and a freedom that is generous and real. We have not yet finished our work. One who has seen, even in a brief visit, the conditions of the West Indian work will no longer be impatient for the withdrawal of British missionaries to fields where there are heathen to evangelize ; nor will he consciously or unconsciously

cherish the notion that for this kind of work inferior men will do. We are slowly training for their destiny a race obviously destined by Nature to dominate the torrid zone where other men cannot thrive. And if the work is done with enlightenment and fervour worthy of the history unrolled in the annals of this centenary, what a magnificent reaction may there be in Africa and all round the world !

One other class of question is started by the memory of an evening in Georgetown, Demerara, and a drive of seven or eight miles through the village settlements the next day. There was a congregation of East Indians from Bengal, to whom the English visitor had the privilege of preaching Christ, with his words interpreted into Hindi by one of the two or three missionaries who have to permeate that great and growing Hindu community. Half the population of British Guiana is now non-Christian, immigrant from the East. And this is the case in other Western regions, where the stronger brown race is supplanting the black, and bringing with it a serious peril to the Christianity established there. But if there is a peril, there is also a great opportunity. We can evangelize India through coolies doing their terms of service in the West Indies or the South Seas, as we saw just now we might be doing through Indian students in British Universities ; One more ' great door and effectual '—are we alert enough to enter ?

So we come at the end of our survey to that darkest realm of all, described by the Edinburgh Commission as ' Unoccupied Sections of the World.' It calls up before my mind what I think will always be the most vivid of my Edinburgh memories. It was

a prayer by Dr. Karl Kumm, of which the elements were largely names of regions unknown to us, but graven on the pleader's heart. I seem to hear that grim monotonous refrain, and the tones of awe and yearning in which it recurred—'X, a country as large as England, without a missionary; Y, a country as large as France, without a missionary; Z, a country as large as Prussia, without a missionary'; and so on, all of the names from one quarter of the globe. No one will wonder that the most living memory of Edinburgh should be one of a prayer!

## VI

We are called by all these considerations to an uplift of spirit and an outburst of zeal such as the Christian Church has never known since the Apostolic Age. Before we turn to the examination of our preparedness for an enterprise so unparalleled, we may remind ourselves of the need of statesmanlike wisdom as well as zeal for the facing of the problem. If by a great inspiration the Church suddenly roused herself to the full extent of her call, and men and money enough came for the occupation of all these neglected or undermanned stations, we should be in danger of throwing away our advantage if we did not call our very best brains to a united and very prayerful planning of the work. The British Empire was founded, said Seeley, in a fit of absence of mind. The precedent is not likely to avail for the establishment of that Empire of which we are now thinking. Not so, at any rate, was the Empire founded in the days of the apostles.



It will be worth our while to look at the strategy which won the first great battle of the Faith. We read the Acts and the life and letters of Paul very superficially if we think that the great missionary's work was directed by blind chance. It was a brilliant and far-seeing policy that achieved its triumph in the capture of the best-placed fortresses all over the Roman Empire before the enemy was awake. Along the great Roman roads, through the great Roman centres of government, Paul travelled with his gospel ; and he took full advantage of the protection that his Roman citizenship gave him. Everything that he did was controlled by the instinct that he must do the maximum of effective work in the minimum of time. He was not weighing one community against another, as if God counted some souls more precious than others. But he meant to win for Christ men who by character, gifts, and opportunities would be most effective propagandists. People of small towns, off the beaten track, belonging to races of inferior culture, would themselves be evangelized most surely if the preachers went first to those who took a larger part in the world's life. For this reason, of course, Paul was eager to get to Rome. Time after time the way was closed to him. At last he seized the opportunity of his trial. His father's death (it would seem) had brought him the needed money, and he could therefore prosecute an appeal in Rome. It was obviously unnecessary, as the provincial authorities themselves declared, but it secured what Paul valued far more than liberty.

But over all this shrewd missionary policy, this masterful scheming of a brain the like of which

history has rarely if ever known, there was the overshadowing cloud of a great obedience. For Paul the reasoning of his own powerful mind was only one among many channels through which the Higher Will was revealed to him. A physical prostration drove him into, or detained him in, the regions of Galatia, a country by no means marked out for him by his line of policy. He followed the Guiding Hand, and founded the Church there. The Epistle to the Galatians justifies that providence to this day. No more telling illustration of Paul's methods can be found than in those vivid verses of narrative where his biographer describes Paul's advance into new territory after revisiting Derbe and Lystra. The Roman province of Asia was before him, with its thriving commercial towns and teeming population, doubtless the objective of the apostle's missionary ambition from the very beginning of his journey. But before they left the 'Phrygo-Galatic Region,' an 'intimation' had come—in what guise we are not told—and the travellers passed by Asia: its time was coming soon. One other promising field was open, and they confidently turned northwards to the great province of Bithynia. A stronger intimation still—was it an actual vision of Jesus that accounts for the unique phrase (Acts xvi. 7)?—forbad them this field also: its time was coming (1 Peter i. 1). Onward, like Israel to the Red Sea, the perplexed but obedient missionaries travelled, to the place where in the dawn of history Europe and Asia met in arms. The name of Troas was destined to mean more for the world than that of Troy. There Paul saw a Philippian doctor, a Gentile proselyte, destined



to be one of his dearest and most trusted friends. In a dream Paul heard Luke pleading with him to cross into Macedonia and help his countrymen. Eagerly in their morning talk over the vision Luke reiterated the plea; and the whole company took it as a message sent from heaven, their reason accepting with full conviction the new and startling direction to which a whole series of perplexing hindrances had brought them. So Paul came to Europe, and the whole history of the world was changed.

I have dwelt on the details of this story—without, of course, stopping to justify the reading of its disputed points—because it seems to me full of priceless instruction for our missionary statesmanship to-day. We must follow Paul's intellectual grip of the facts, and think in continents like him. But we must be always open to vision, which many a time may lead us where unaided reason would not point. Sometimes the interests of the Kingdom may bid us preach in Lystra, and let Ephesus wait. 'We shall not full direction need,' if, like Paul, we use all the powers God has given the Church, and wait for the Guiding Hand.

## VII

Our survey of the field is enough to show that the present efforts of all the Churches will need to be, on the lowest estimate, trebled, if the opportunity of really evangelizing the world is to be seriously accepted. The existing staff of the Missionary Societies cannot cope with more than a fraction of the work for which they are nominally responsible;

and vast territories remain absolutely unexplored by the gospel messengers. Dr. Mott told us at Edinburgh that properly arranged co-operation between existing Protestant agencies would double the effectiveness of the forces now on the field. Assuming this estimate—and no man's knowledge goes further than Dr. Mott's—we may well feel that on the foreign field 'our unhappy divisions' have been causing a waste of labour and resources nothing less than scandalous. There are many facts which make the statement at first sight surprising. We know from missionary testimony how real is the brotherly co-operation upon the field to-day. Societies apportion spheres to a large extent so as to avoid overlapping; and in the comparatively few places where this has failed, the overmanning bears no relation to the waste caused by similar behaviour at home. The realities of the conflict with heathenism naturally force Christian men to recognize the futility and wickedness of refusal to help other Christians, at least by apportioning 'spheres of influence,' when the alternative is failure to get any form of Christianity preached at all. Of course, there are a few deplorable exceptions. We meet at home Christian ministers who will not support the Bible Society, because it involves working with men whose views on the organization of the Church are incorrect. Sometimes this curious phenomenon may be seen abroad. I found in a part of the West Indian field where a large immigrant heathen population from Bengal still awaits effective evangelization on an adequate scale, that the common-sense plan of apportioning these scattered settlements among the Christian

Churches at work in the colony was doomed to remain untried because of this obstacle. It is hard to be patient with these purely stupid bigots, who must be repudiated almost as heartily by the 'Catholic' enthusiasts we heard at Edinburgh as by ourselves. But the deepening of spiritual life within all sections of the Church of Christ will do away with these as with all other obstacles that the failure of His servants puts in the way of His triumphal progress; and we must be content to wait and pray.

If the obvious evils of quasi-competitive Missions are less grave than Dr. Mott's statement implies, we can soon see where a really thorough interdenominational federation would work an immense improvement. A united board, like the Edinburgh Continuation Committee, could see as no society's executive can possibly see where it will pay best to plant our workers, and how we may best distribute the resources at our command. Missionary statesmanship would have an opportunity such as is sadly wanting under present conditions. There is a very natural tendency to fall into grooves, as sorely-tried officers go through the sickening toil of guarding expenditure with income always short of the ordinary needs. What room is there for vision, for daring ventures and far-sighted policy that can gauge the needs of a generation hence, all too likely to be overwhelmed by the prosaic necessities of to-day? If only we could do a large part of our administrative work in concert with men of other Churches, gaining inspiration and encouragement from such fellowship, and bringing back to the executive of our several societies the fruits of

collective experience! Such co-operation demands as its first prerequisite a very high spiritual level in the Churches that stand behind the Missionary Societies. Cold metal will not weld; and no practical steps towards Christian unity can be taken until all alike have learnt the meaning of the word attributed to the Master—'He that is near me is near the fire.'

But from economies of labour and money, from wiser methods and more far-sighted statesmanship on the part of the hard-working and devoted men who manage our Missionary Societies, we come to the problem that underlies our whole enterprise, the Home Base. Is the Church in Christian lands equal to the tremendous task that God has laid upon her? Let us ask the question in terms of the part of the missionary campaign carried on through a century by the Church to which this appeal is specially addressed: it can be easily adapted to the conditions of our sister organizations. In the *Minutes of Conference* for 1912 we are reported to have 690 ministers on our foreign field; and the Women's Auxiliary sends out 93 lady missionaries from this country. The total income of the two societies in 1911 was about £225,000—including what came from the mission field itself. To make a real and lasting impression on the world's heathenism we must all of us treble our agencies—an estimate utterly below the mark, but one that we may take for the sake of argument. Could the Wesleyan Methodist Church afford to raise yearly two-thirds of a million sterling, and find some 2,300 men and women willing to go abroad and worth sending? The question will raise an incredulous smile. Yet,

if we did, should we be surpassing the men of 1813? Under the awful strain of the Napoleonic War, in a country well-nigh bankrupt and drained of its best blood, they launched their great venture. In membership and in wealth, by all statistics that can be set down on the printed page, our resources distance theirs. We have spent on a single church building much more than a year's income of our Missionary Society. Every year we spend, in this country alone, upon improving and beautifying our chapels, and building new ones on a rising scale of goodness and comfort, money that would endow our Missions up to the highest possible standard, were we content to worship in places comparable with those in which our brethren abroad gather for prayer and praise. The income I have suggested would only be some twenty-six shillings per member, including those on trial; and our multitude of deeply-attached adherents, not conforming to our special test of membership, would probably reduce that by one-half. Even apart from this, the average is lower than the thirty shillings per member contributed to Foreign Missions in the Society of Friends. There are thousands of our poorer members who give as much as that to the cause of God every year; and how many are there who could give ten or a hundred times as much and never know the luxury of sacrifice? Yes, the money is there, and it would be poured out in the wider service of the Kingdom, if once the heart of our people were 'strangely warmed.'

And the men and women for service—are they there? Could we send out to foreign work a company almost as numerous as the whole of our

home ministry, without impoverishing our countless agencies of evangelism in the towns and villages of Great Britain? Why, yes, of course—*if*—! If every member were a missionary at heart, if every preacher were a prophet speaking from lips touched with fire, if every hearer found in the house of God that religion is the one overwhelming reality of life. *If*—! why, if these things were so, the home membership itself would be doubled or trebled in a very little time. Once again, the question is answered instantly and obviously by making the bold assumption that history might repeat itself, and our ears hear the voice of God as our fathers heard it in great days of yore.

I started my last paragraph with the intention of asking very seriously how far our home Churches, of all denominations, approximate to-day to the level at which they must live if they are to win the people at home and the world outside. Long ago the apostle of the Gentiles wrote a letter to a Church in a prosperous commercial town, a letter circulated among several Churches and coming down to us by the name of the largest of them all. A Church that could read and assimilate the 'Epistle to the Ephesians' was assuredly in no low spiritual state. But Laodicea was a place where men grew rich and glutted with comfort; and by the end of that century, when Paul had long worn his martyr's crown, the Christians in that Manchester of Roman Asia were no longer ambitious to differ from their world. ¶ They received another apostolic message—how strangely different from the first! In it Christ speaks from His glory to men who bear His name and sign, but have lost all the power of His



religion. He compares them to the thin cascade of nauseous lukewarm water falling over the cliff that confronts the silence and the scanty ruins which once were Laodicea. It is the gravestone, as it were, of a Church that lives only by that terrible comparison which still shines in the white incrustations upon the cliff, undimmed by faint clouds of steam. As the letter closes, the picture changes, and comes home to our eyes as well as our thought through one of the greatest of modern sacred paintings. There stands the Saviour at the fast-closed door. No handle is seen, and the ivy that firmly clings to it proclaims that it had never been used. He whom they still call 'Lord! Lord!' may enter, if He will, with the motley crowd that presses in by another entrance, turned not to the silent forest of meditation but to the busy street. Not thus will He enter: 'He will be all in all, or He will be nothing.' The Church that compromises its differences with the world had far better not exist. 'I would thou wert cold!' For a merely nominal Christianity serves only as an opiate to conscience, while it is a perpetual scandal to men that are without. There was room for the waking of memory, for the longing after better days gone by, had those men openly relapsed into heathenism. But they were Christians still—orthodox in opinion and punctilious in worship. They had paid their fire insurance, and all was well! It counted nothing with them that Laodicea was a permanent hindrance to the advance of the faith of Christ in all the country round.

In recalling this lurid picture of a peril that has realized itself all too often in the history of the Church, I need hardly say that I am not suggesting

any immediate application to the present state of religion in England. To assert this or anything like it would be a grotesque exaggeration. But though religion in all the Churches is manifestly at a temperature incomparably higher than in those dark days two hundred years ago, before Wesley came, it is also manifest that it is by no means at boiling-point. And for the purposes for which Christ ordained Christianity, nothing short of the boiling-point will serve. Water that would scald the engineer's hand may be perfectly useless for filling the cylinder with steam. And it is a very heavy pressure of steam that is needed for this task. There was no mistake about the pressure in the Reformation days, when the road of human progress had to be cut through those vast accumulations of rubbish into the liberty of a new era. As obvious was the explosive energy that triumphed over spiritual and moral degeneration in the time of the Methodist Revival. And when we think of the colossal difficulties among which the W.M.M.S. was started a century ago, we can certainly declare that Wesley's successors had not allowed the fire to burn low.

The question, then, is whether the Home Churches in countries which maintain the foreign propaganda of Protestant Christianity have sufficient steam-pressure for the uphill journey before them. The figure is helpful in many ways, for it reminds us of the vital fact that the same high pressure avails for the swifter and surer speeding of the lighter load to its destination. We hear often from men of the world, and sometimes even from men professing to hold and cherish the principles of Christianity, that



charity begins at home, that while there are heathens in England we have no business to spend our strength on the conversion of heathens in India, and so forth. The argument depends, of course, on the assumption that spiritual forces can be measured by 'common sense,' by the application of laws known to work without fail in the material world. But common sense itself would soon show that the analogy is bound to break down. It fails when we apply it to the immaterial side of human life, even apart from religion. Any one can see that the man whose maxim is 'Charity begins at home' normally shows less charity at home than the large-hearted man whose interests go far afield. Material wealth cannot be spent and retained at the same time. But love, the gold of the heart, is found to accumulate in proportion as it is prodigally expended. The familiar paradox of John Bunyan is dimly realized even by men who have never entered the realm in which it is an everyday principle:

There was a man—the world did think him mad—  
The more he gave away, the more he had.

Spiritual forces everywhere prove themselves to run more deeply when spread over a wider area. And what is imperfectly realizable among all the limitations of a world where selfishness still has great power, becomes abundantly clear when we enter the realm of religion. In the teaching of Jesus it is made constantly apparent that His kingdom is not of this world, but inverts the whole system of worldly precedence and denies every axiom of worldly wisdom. There the princes

have the motto '*Ich dien*'; the King is He who stooped to the death of a slave. Wealth is won by giving, power by yielding, conquest is achieved not by killing but by being killed. Charity at home attains its richest fullness by starting far away; the man whose eyes are in the ends of the earth alone has this wisdom of love for problems at his own door. A Christian accordingly cannot further Home Missions by concentrating on them the interest deliberately withdrawn from work abroad. In the material expression of such interest, of course, home and foreign evangelization may clash to a certain extent. The poor widow who has already put both her mites into the treasury for one part of God's work may afterwards find she has only her prayers to give to the other. The work will lose nothing thereby. But the enthusiast for the Kingdom of Christ who limits his enthusiasm to the work in his own corner is an impossible figure; the confession that interest in Foreign Missions is lacking is that of a man whose service at home is shown to be little worth. In pleading for a mighty revival of enthusiasm for the foreign work, we are really urging our people to cry to God for the one power that can bring revival of religion at home.

Instead of attempting any answer to the question whether religion at home is really on the ebb, and the Churches slowly losing that by which they live, I will advance further my plea for the general recognition of Foreign Missions as the crucial test of spiritual life. If we are to test the spiritual state of any Church by statistics, we shall, I am convinced, come nearer a true estimate by examining its foreign balance-sheet than by any other

method. Membership returns may be largely affected by changes in conditions. Expenditure on church building might even be in some circumstances an evidence of a subtler form of selfishness. Money given to Missions eliminates the lower motives which may mix unseen with our very giving to God. Its results are never to be under our eyes : we shall not enjoy the beauty of the church we have helped to build, or profit by the preaching of the missionary we support. If it is ' more blessed to give than to receive,' the blessedness of giving must be greatest where there is least return for our giving in benefits enjoyed by ourselves. A steady rise in missionary income, secured not by exceptional large gifts from the wealthy and generous, but by small increases evenly distributed throughout the membership, would be the irrefragable proof of vitality, outweighing almost any possible discouragement.

Alas ! we cannot comfort ourselves under disappointment by urging that this test contradicts the results of others. Edinburgh has not yet affected the Churches as a whole. In Mr. Oldham's summary,<sup>1</sup> from which we have quoted before, we read :

In the matter of finance the prevailing note at the last annual meetings of the various British societies was one of relief. The relief, however, was due rather to the disappearance of a burden than to a well-grounded hope with regard to the future. The heavy deficits of recent years have been avoided. But the improved financial position of the societies has been due to strict limitation of expenditure, increases in legacies, utilization of special funds, and generous special contributions. The gross home income of

<sup>1</sup> *Internat. Review of Missions*, January, 1913, p. 69.

the eight largest societies is only slightly increased, being £1,365,000 as against £1,363,638 for the preceding year. While some societies report the largest income of any normal year, there is this disquieting feature in the published accounts of almost all the societies, that subscriptions, donations, and collections as a rule show decreases. These decreases are slight in some cases, but are of the gravest significance, emphasizing as they do the trend towards stagnation. . . . There is no sign of any general broadening of the home base by an increase in the number of contributors or an improved scale of giving. The serious financial position of the societies has been righted, but the problem of properly financing the work has by no means been solved.

All this, be it remembered, in a time of growing prosperity, when the members of Christian Churches have had more money to give. Under conditions like these, what prospect is there that the golden opportunity will be seized and Christ effectively proclaimed in all countries of the earth? To accomplish this duty, the Church must awake to the fact that she is on the road that leads to Laodicea, must turn and flee for dear life from that City of Destruction. Her own salvation hangs always and utterly upon her zeal for the salvation of the world.

### VIII

Through every paragraph of our survey we have found ourselves coming by different roads to one goal. The challenge of the non-Christian world will be answered when the Church is baptized with Holy Spirit and Fire. Every obstacle will be cleared away when the Day of Pentecost has fully

come. The obstinate apathy of the masses in Christian lands, the opposition of sincere thinkers or dilettante intellectuals, the rebellion of men to whom 'Puritan' is the last word of contempt and abuse—even these will be marvellously wrought upon when Christians go about the world with the look upon their face that tells men they have been with Jesus. How is this wonderful new life to be regained? Is our present insufficiency merely an ebb of the tide, which will go down further to dead low water, and then automatically turn, deaf to any human voice that bids it either stay its fall or refuse to rise?

To that question I have, of course, but one answer. It has been the answer of official Christendom from the first, expounded by theologians, practised by saints, and ignored by the vast majority of professed believers to the greatest proportion of its boundless significance. Pious Moslems converted to Christianity express astonishment that the endless formal prayers of their old faith answer to nothing at all visible in the community they have joined.<sup>1</sup> Alas! have we so forgotten our Master's precept and example? 'The harvest is plenteous, the labourers are few: *pray therefore!*'<sup>2</sup>

In a previous chapter I was giving one or two illustrations of the principle that experience is always bringing to us new resources in our Faith. A discovery is made, which inspires a new age and transforms the face of the earth. And it proves to be only the discovery that a truism is true, that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Internat. Review of Missions*, January, 1913, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> I write under the grateful recollection of a very searching missionary sermon on this saying by a dear friend and comrade.

what we always knew by heart was actually a word that meant something. If the problem of world evangelization is going to be solved in our time, it will only be through the popularizing, as it were, of a discovery that the holiest of men and women have made in every age, and passionately commended to our deaf ears. There is one well-known Mission that has never advertised its needs, run into debt, or asked for money. It will book passages for half-a-dozen missionaries when there is no money to pay for them. And instead of even telling well-trying friends that those passages must be revoked unless money comes in, the leaders of the Mission meet quietly for prayer. The money always comes! Materialist psychology may be invited to explain how. Presumably the great goddess Chance would be invoked—the omnipotent power to whom materialists ancient and modern have always been content to bow. The Christian solution seems easier. 'A good man's inspired intercession has mighty power,' says James the Lord's brother.<sup>1</sup> How little can we realize what a tremendous force is wielded by the concentrated will of a man wholly convinced of the Supreme Reality before whom he stands, and bending all his deepest faculties in a mighty longing for an object 'inwrought' within his soul by the Spirit of God! A force as real as that which bears the electric message through the ether, and far more wonderful, is in the hands of God to direct at His will. Is it strange that it should prevail?

Describing the pre-eminent greatness of John the Baptist, our Lord singled out the fact that he first

<sup>1</sup> James v. 16: read 'inwrought' for the R.V. 'in its working.'



taught men to 'force on' the Kingdom of heaven.<sup>1</sup> He and those who entered into his teaching were not minded to wait passively for a heavenly inheritance that might or might not come after long ages: like bandits they would 'take it by force.' The original form and meaning of this saying cannot be recovered with certainty, but the paraphrase I have given seems to present the most probable view of it. It is interesting to turn from words preserved in the oldest New Testament record to their commentary on the last written page of the sacred Book. All things around us have upon them the stamp of decay, cries the prophet; what, then, should be the life of men who can see past the fleeting into the Eternal? By holiness in all their movements among men, by constant reverence and prayer before God, they are to 'await and hasten the advent of the day of God.'<sup>2</sup> A paradoxical combination, surely! No, not for those who understand. Waiting is the work of those who have obediently done man's part, and now confidently look for God to do His. The farmer ploughs and sows and harrows, and then 'waits for the earth's precious harvest.' He has nothing to do but have patience, until his field has received God's gift of rain. The great poet in his blindness and isolation, fallen on evil days and evil tongues, no longer able to serve his country as in the great days when in her name he could write words that shook Europe—what can he do till the time of his release? Patience speaks to him too—

They also serve who only stand and wait.

It is the waiting of those who have done the will of God and have now to stand aside and watch for His salvation, Faith's harder task. They are not idle: they have to make their own life match the splendour of their Hope. 'Eager—spotless and without blame—in peace,' such are the notes that must be found in their character when the day shall dawn. And while they are thus 'waiting' they are all the time 'hastening' that day. The world has to be prepared for that royal Advent<sup>1</sup>; if righteousness is to 'dwell' in the new earth, it must first sojourn in the old one. All the power of a human soul that is permeated with the divine has to be directed upon human souls around, and on human souls far away; for the dim telepathic forces, the bare existence of which we are just learning to recognize, can carry that soul-power into regions sundered far in distance and in language. If the divine event tarries, it is 'the patience of our Lord,' who wills that all should be saved. They, then, who by the twin ministries of fervent evangelism and fervent prayer spend their lives in winning souls, are helping the purpose of God 'shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His Kingdom.'

The extent to which the Advent Hope filled the thought of Jesus Himself and of the Early Church has been the subject of one of the most fruitful theological debates of our time, and the debate is not yet over. One thing at any rate has become clearer than ever. Their conviction that the Advent of the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *Parousia* (2 Pet. iii. 12, &c.) was in pre-Christian Egypt and elsewhere a technical term for the state visit of a king to some place in his dominions.



was very near, and that they would see it with the eyes of their flesh, undeniably spurred Christian men to unparalleled effort for the spread of the Faith. 'The evangelization of the world in this generation' is a motto writ large over all their work. Their King's business required haste, for that generation was not to pass away until His will was done. The world for them was only the Roman Empire, but it was big enough! Yet the motto was no dream. Within the lifetime of those apostles the Empire *was* evangelized. There was a living Church of God in every district—in dilettante Athens and sensual Corinth, in imperial Rome and barbarous Lystra—composed of men and women for whom the duty of evangelism was the very law of their being. Before Rome awoke to the existence of a rival Empire that was 'turning the world upside down,' the Church was established far more securely than by any state law. The methods of Diocletian, followed out in Palestine under the direction of Saul of Tarsus, might have extinguished 'the name of Jesus of Nazareth,' and the modern world might never have heard how the stones had silenced a few thousand Stephens, and the cross rewarded the wild fanaticism of a small host of Peters. But Rome did not know how to use Saul, nor care to repress Paul—*animae magnae prodigum Paullum*<sup>1</sup>—till he had won a victory more decisive than that which his namesake refused to survive at Cannae. When Rome knew her danger, the Church was too numerous and ubiquitous to be blotted out by massacre. Her providential escape was due to her conviction that

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes* i. xii. 38: L. Aemilius Paullus 'threw away his noble life when the Carthaginian overcame.'

the time was short—as in truth it was, though the Advent was not to be after the manner she expected ! She received her talent from her Master's dying hand, and '*straightway* went and traded with the same.' Had she said, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' that talent would never have emerged from its grave to be used by her hands for Him.

Now the motto which I have attributed to the Early Church is, as far as its language goes, of very modern coining. I was privileged to be present myself when it was accepted by a great company of Christian students gathered together in Liverpool from all parts of the world ; nor was I young enough to be of their number except as a sympathizer. Doubtless to the average Christian outsider the watchword seemed only the impossible dream of hopeful youth. But its words crystallized into a phrase the whole spirit of the Apostolic Age ; and for myself, having watched the Student Movement from its very birth—for Moody and Sankey's mission in Cambridge in 1882 was of all single causes the mightiest—I have always wondered at the wisdom that has guided it throughout, even more than at the enthusiasm, natural to the young, that has made it a world-wide power. For if only the whole Church were fired with the spirit that has wrought mightily in that movement, the evangelization of the world in the lifetime of the students who founded their Volunteer Missionary Union would be wholly possible and almost easy. But whatever the Churches might do or fail to do, the student's 'watchword' meant for him a pledge that his own life and all his powers were offered at God's call to be spent for the Kingdom. Thucydides somewhere

describes a battle in which the feeling was so keen that every combatant thought things were going badly where he was not fighting himself. Something of that spirit animates the volunteer who goes forth with that watchword in his soul. He is not answerable for others' zeal. But so far as in him lies—and who shall say what does not lie within the range of a young life utterly surrendered to Him with whom all things are possible?—the world shall be evangelized before he comes to die. 'With God be the rest!'

I have said that the Student Volunteer watchword expresses the spirit of the Apostolic Age in modern words. But, after all, that age contrived to concentrate all the meaning of it into still shorter compass. It was in the language of Canaan, preserved even in a Gentile Church like that of Corinth for the sacred association of its sound, and for preservation from the ears of the profane. *Maranatha*, by slight change in intonation, was either a creed or a prayer. 'Our Lord cometh' and 'Our Lord, come!' are both combined in the solemn close of the Revelation. And the watchword was no cry of lazy 'saints,' longing for the destruction of their enemies and their own deliverance from this naughty world. They knew that ere that day the Gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed to all the nations, and they were only eager that the condition might be speedily fulfilled. In the place where Paul quotes the watchword he sets it after the terrible words, 'If any loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema'—cut off from a missionary Church that has no room for the lukewarm. He will be nearer salvation in the outer darkness than at the

King's table without the garment of love and praise !

Can we recover for our own time the tremendous energy of that war-cry? In our day, unhappily, the watchword has passed largely into the guardianship of cranks and visionaries, who have lost the Maranatha of the first century in the Chiliasm of the second. Ordinary sane Christians only shrug their shoulders when the 'millennium' is mentioned, with all the weary, stupid efforts at telling 'times and seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority.' But Maranatha does not come to us from the 'limited intelligence' of Papias—as Eusebius put it—but from the mighty mind of Paul. Nor does it mean that we should be daily watching the skies for the sign of the Son of Man. Our eyes are better occupied below, looking for knightly quests whereby we may make the world ready for His coming. Yet, for all that, we make a great mistake if we think we can dispense with the essential other-worldliness of the Christian Faith. No material progress will ever cleanse the Augean stable of this world sufficiently to make it a site for the New Jerusalem. Even material considerations prove to us that we have not here an abiding city. However marvellously science may increase the productivity of the soil, or devise unheard-of resources for feeding the multitudes upon the surface of this little planet, the day must surely come when Mother Earth can no longer provide for her brood. And before that day something may happen to our sun, as almost yearly happens to other suns in the depths of space, causing a hitherto invisible point of light to blaze out into a new star. To us such an outburst would mean, of course, that in literal truth the heavens

would catch fire and be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are therein vanish even more suddenly than the apocalyptist dreamed. Surely, however certain we may be that the catastrophe is not likely to be in our time, still more certain that the threatened famine on an overcrowded earth will not come for ages—not, perhaps, till the very cooling of the sun brings disaster from another quarter—yet we are bound to confess that our race is a race of sojourners after all. Must not the Theist go on to argue that God has some better place than an earthly paradise to be the home of His perfected creation?

I need not develop this argument further, or spend time on the proof which comes from our study of facts lying deeper than material conditions. Do we really see reason to hope that centuries hence the Church herself on earth will have fully learnt the simple code of the Kingdom—that we must love God utterly, and our neighbour as much as ourselves? And even if in all her members the Church is practising that code before the world, will human nature here be so changed that all men will yield without a struggle to the appeal? Will the ape and the tiger have died in man, and Borgias and Leopolds cease to flourish? I can find no warrant for such an optimism in Christian prophecy, nor in any promises that scientific sociology may hold out. Even if such a golden age should dawn, we could only ask why a hard fate compelled those Borgias and Leopolds to be born in an age that had no magnetic force to drag them into righteousness. The Kingdom of God would stand for the future, but its golden streets would imperfectly hide the blood and shame

and tears of men whose damnation it was that they were born a few millennia or hundreds of millennia too soon. Not by such a heaven could the ways of God to men be finally justified beyond appeal. Paradise Regained must be in a world where birth and death alike are no more, and the material is the passive instrument of the spiritual, and never its lord.

It is, of course, to such a world that our Lord's words and those of His first followers ever point. Nothing less than a New Earth will satisfy the conditions of the Promise. This present world is passing away, and the lust thereof. It is a training-school, a testing-place, for those who shall be accounted worthy to attain unto that world. Here we are like the slaves in the parable, set to the trivial task of trading on a capital of three or four pounds sterling, but destined to be amazingly rewarded for faithfulness and resource by the gift of freedom and authority. So we, if faithful, are to be there promoted to tasks as incomparably vaster than those of this life as was the governorship of a Decapolis than the pedlar's trade of a slave. The light of this great Future shines upon our path to-day, and he who sees it most clearly will be foremost in the work that is at last to bring the Kingdom in.

The reminder I have just been recalling is peculiarly needed by us of the Evangelical Free Churches. The pious Roman may cherish his pessimist outlook on the world within the cloister where he has buried himself for meditation and prayer. We have no place for the cloister in our creed. We fervently believe that God has given



us our place in the thick of the fight ; and we are assured, like Socrates of old, that it were unutterable shame for us to desert our post and flee. But fighting as we are by the side of men whose outlook is on this world only, and their hope in a progress that shall bring peace on earth, we are in some danger of confounding our ideal with theirs. Beyond all other men we need to be other-worldly, heavenly-minded, with our treasure laid up in the place where no moth or rust consumes, and no demon of disillusionment breaks in to steal our life's hope. We need not fear that other-worldliness will make us less eager to mend this world. We fight with fleshly lusts, because they ' campaign against the soul '—the one part of man that is meant to see the Kingdom of God, and therefore is beyond any exchanging with treasures of the earth. We strive to destroy sweating and swilling, because such environments make it so fearfully difficult for a human spirit to be made ready for service in the realm of light. We preach the Gospel to the heathen, because it will give them a mighty uplift towards that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

The call of this other-worldliness is a call to understand and practise a too-much-neglected grace, standing half forgotten between its sister graces in the Christian triad. We are saved by Faith, we know, and we are saved unto Love ; but we seldom remember that ' we were saved by Hope.' Appreciation of the difference between Faith and Hope may help us to realize the importance of the latter, which takes a far greater part in the New Testament than it does in our conceptions

of religion. We might express the difference by adapting Dryden's phrase: Hope 'raised a mortal to the skies'; Faith 'drew an angel down.' Hope is the Sunday grace, and Faith the weekday. The one lifts us into the Holy Mount, where it is good to be, and we see the pattern of Divine Perfection which we are to copy on earth as exactly as we may. The other comes out of the Unseen to be our companion, assuring us hourly that we are following no phantom glory when we press on toward the distant dawn. Faith confidently declares 'Our Lord cometh,' though now she sees Him not. Hope has the rapt vision of the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of God, and cries, 'Our Lord, come!' Faith holds 'the title-deeds of things hoped for, the proof of things unseen.'<sup>1</sup> Hope, fixed on Him to whom we are to be like when we see Him as He is, enables us to purify ourselves even as He is pure.

If this is the function of Hope, we can realize how Hope can 'save' the Church and all its individual members. 'We are waiting'—waiting a century after the Ascension, waiting still to-day, and likely to wait much longer—'for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.' How long the interval that separates us from the glorious Future, we know not, and we know we do not know. Be the interval long or short, our daily conduct is determined by the call to live worthily of our franchise in the City which Hope's optic glass has given us to see. The perspective of our life is determined by a vanishing-point fixed far away

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xi. 1, according to what I believe to be the most probable translation. See my note in *Expositor*, December, 1903, p. 438 f.



and yet very near : as with Browning's Lazarus, the trifles become momentous and the great things small. And beyond all other duties, overwhelmingly peremptory in its urgent distinctness, sounds the call that forbids us to 'be saved alone': we must by all means win some to be our comrades in the vaster service of the Kingdom on high. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be, nor when. But with those who have fellowship with us in the blessed hope, we wait on God's good time. The Master will come again, as He came before, in 'the fullness of the years,' when through His abiding Presence with His servants He has accomplished His new 'preparation of the Gospel.' Meanwhile we 'await and hasten the Advent' of our hope; and in a world of indifferent or hostile men know our fellows by the watchword in the tongue that only the citizens of heaven can understand.

Let us leave off on this last great word of Scripture, that tells us what is the goal of creation, the destiny of Man. Righteousness here is too often an ineffectual angel, tarrying for a while, but soon driven back to a world where she is at home. There she will be enthroned for ever, and none will dispute her sway. This enthronement of righteousness is the fit climax of New Testament Scripture, for it is the supreme purpose of all religion. We have traced the long, slow, upward progress—slow and painful because nothing supremely great can be born without pangs. We have seen how through the many myriad years Man has groped after God, never deserted by Him who only would not make the finding easy because the seeking was to be blessed. We found religion, even in its rudimentary stages,

the providential guardian of all man's earliest strivings after social righteousness. We found new evidence of the witness borne to God by earnest and high-souled men of every tribe and kindred and tongue. And so we reached at last the consummation in the coming of Him who shall gather from far all the scattered limbs of Truth, shall 'bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection.' In Him we see the Power that can not only give to men the perfect knowledge that at the last shall solve all the problems of existence, but endue their will with perfect resistance to every form of evil, and thus set the crown upon the whole creation of God. Having learned obedience through what he has suffered in all the long ages of wrong and sorrow, Man shall know that God's Will is his peace; and in that knowledge shall go forth into the unlimited service of the new world where righteousness dwelleth for evermore.

